The Complete Crumb Comics

Volume 3

Starring Fritz the Cat

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The summer's travels to New York and Atlantic City had reignited the old Kerouacian on-the-road wanderlust that Robert had once shared with brother Charles: they'd never taken off on their fantasized cross-country trek, but Robert now had more self-confidence and was rapidly losing his lifelong fear of new people and new situations. "I thought Europe would be better than America. I might even live there."

In September, Robert arranged a freelance-by-mail setup with American Greetings: They would send him Hi Brow card ideas, he would send them back finished art, they would send him payments of around $25 per card—enough, he figured, for a frugal but secure living at the 1964 rate of exchange. As a going-away present, his Hi Brow cronies gave him an enormous, thick hardbound book of blank art paper. In the following months it was destined to be filled with the visualized wanderings of another questing '60s rover: Fritz the Cat.

Newly married, in a strange land thousands of miles from America, he collated the confusion of inspirations and images that both attracted and repelled him about his native country, its inhabitants, and himself: the beatniks and bourgeois, folkers and rockers, blacks and radicals, poets and potheads. He conjured the lure of The Road, big fast cars, hitchhiking, bumming the railroads, crashing parties; even the understated narrow-tie cool of the JFK/LBJ-era government secret agents of paperback and television glory.

Robert dressed his less-than-Great society in animal skins, and into them he sent a cat named Fritz. Fritz had begun as a real cat, a pet of the Crumb family (though much of his imagined character came from another feline named Fred). Robert first pencilled short, lighthearted Fritz adventures in small, blue-lined composition books. But the impressive, blank, waiting pages of "the big book" seemed to demand more, both of the artist and his creation.

Fritz became a picaresque, nine-lived stand-in for Robert himself, enjoying the adventures his creator had only dreamed of in envious fantasy. Fritz was a glib talker, master of any situation, while Robert saw himself as tongue-tied and tense. Fritz was a ladies' man, a heartbreaker, while Robert 'til very recently had been a very reluctant virgin. Fritz was the center of a circle of friends and admirers; Robert, a loner. Fritz was the instigator for any kind of prank or spree, with no moral or ethical hangups; Robert suffered under a quarryload of familial inhibitions and Catholic guilt-trips.

Continued on back flap—

THE COMPLETE CRUMB

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VOLUME 3

Starring

FRITZ the CAT

R. CRUMB

Edited by Gary Groth
with Robert Flore

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INTRODUCTION

The First Girl That Came Along

by Marty Pahls

It was a Gypsy palm reader, holding forth at the unromantic locale of Cleveland's East 105 and Euclid, who first told an unhappy young Robert Crumb, "You luck's agonna change." In the spring of 1964, her two-dollar prognostication began to come true.

"Spring of '64," Robert recalls. "The world seemed full of promise." Up until now, his world had seemed full of despair. Fleeing an impossible family situation in Philadelphia, depressed and marginally suicidal, armed with nothing but his raw 19-year-old talent and a few notebooks of pencilled drawings, he had landed at American Greetings Corporation, an assembly-line operation designed to churn out birthday and holiday cards with industrial efficiency and artistic monotony. As he plugged away on the firm's new pseudo-hip Hi Brow series, however, changes were slowly taking place below the outwardly dreary surface of his daily routine. His drawing ability was expanding in quantum jumps: not just his new mastery of inking, rendering, and color media, but also the closely-observed and mordantly depicted satirical content of his concepts. Naturally this got no exposure through the official production of "AG." The nascent Crumb essence was instead birthed in a series of private sketchbooks and notebooks, which only years later (and then fragmentarily) reached the public eye.

Also, and at long last, Robert was beginning to find friends—people who accepted him for himself, who sometimes even thought of him as some kind of indefinable, uncategorized genius. All his life he'd seen himself as a freak, a four-eyed, star-crossed, skinny loner, with a message impossible to communicate to an uncaring and uninterested world. But starting with the Hi Brow crew, and spreading out into the unseen ranks of Cleveland's students, bohemians, and proto-beatniks, he was suddenly making contact in a way he'd feared himself incapable of.

He was even, miracle of miracles, meeting girls—and finding to his wonderment that he wasn't poison to them. One of the key players in the drama of extracting Robert Crumb from his own navel was a short, sharp-tongued young woman from Detroit named Liz Johnston. She hung with an artsy-folksy fringe who frequented La Cave, a guitar-and-espresso basement near Case-Western Reserve University and not far from the third-floor walkup Robert and I shared on East 115 Street. Liz took an apartment at East Boulevard and Deering that became the nucleus for a sort of salon: "Apt Four," her establishment, was even intended by several regulars as the name of a literary mag, which (typically Cleveland) never got published.

"At the same time," Robert remembers, "the whole hippie thing was just beginning to coalesce. There were these guys from these black civil rights organizations hanging around that apartment . . .People were going down to Atlanta, Mississippi, and all that stuff." Race riots in East Cleveland and Little Italy, anti-nuclear marches, and Fair Play for Cuba (if not yet marijuana) were all part of the ferment in the Lake Erie air. At Apt Four, Robert rubbed shoulders with local poets, activists, artists, and musicians. Liz's boyfriend, Buzz Linhart, played jazz vibes and was "in and out of there, back and forth to New York"—a path Robert would soon follow. As the Dylan image began to stalk the land, Linhart switched to guitar and vocal, joining the new breed of coffee-house-spawned "singer-songwriters."

Liz was an aspiring artist, and encouraged Robert to take his sketchbook for walks along the lakefront, through parks, and into ethnic neighborhoods, where he would draw while she chattered away, occasionally making a stab at a picture. These invariably failed to come up to Robert's, a constant source of frustration to her.

"Me and Liz tried to get it on sexually a couple of times," says Robert, "but it just didn't work. I wasn't that attracted to her. So she said, 'I've got just the girl for you, Robert.' Years after I kinda thought she did that to get even with me for not being interested in her."

What Liz did was introduce Robert to Dana Morgan, a Cuyahoga Community College student from middle-class Cleveland Heights. Robert had loaned Liz *The Big Yum Yum Book*, a gorgeous full-color fantasy (about a gigantically plump teenage girl and a scrawny, lovesick toad) drawn in a blank-paper book. Liz passed it on to Dana, described its lonely creator, and sat back to watch what would happen.

They met at Liz's pad. "Dana had the book with her and was hugging it to herself. She said, 'I really love this book! It's wonderful!' I was very attracted to her physically: a big robust creature, really beautiful Krishna-like face." Later, after LSD had entered their lives, a tripping Robert would stare at Dana's face as if it were a Hindu devotional painting. "Big oval brown eyes, real classic Jewish-looking face. Tall, really physically strong—big legs and all that." Had the toad

suddenly found his 18-year-old dream girl!"

"I said, 'You intrigue me,' or something." Liz left, the conversation wound down, and they spend the rest of the night playing kissing games. Both were monumentally shy virgins, and remained so, for that night at least.

But they kept seeing each other, and, according to Robert, "She really jumped on me fast." One evening after work at American Greetings he arrived back at our apartment on East 115 Street to find Dana waiting for him in his bed. But it was two months, he claims, before they were able to overcome their shyness and consummate things.

Very soon, the inexperienced Robert found himself on a fast track geared to snuff out his new feeling of freedom. "Dana just glommed onto me so intensely that it kinda scared me off from her—threw me into a quandary. Not right from the first night: It took a few weeks. I never got over the feeling she wanted to suffocate me. It took me nine years to get away." She began, says Robert, to talk about this nice little house in Garfield Heights some relatives would let them rent after they were married—and about a baby.

At first, Robert reveled in "young love . . . a big girl that would lie too jump on her." But, feeling threatened—especially by the thought of Robert leaving her—"Dana would break down and blubber like a three-year-old child . . . Very quickly she made me feel I would be abandoning her to some terrible fate by leaving her."

Confused and frightened, yet held by what he called "her guilt hooks," Robert told Dana he had to "get away and think." He went to Tom Wilson, his boss at Hi Brows, got a leave of absence, and headed for New York City.

As would happen in the future, seeing a problem escalate into a crisis, Robert opted to deal with it by putting miles between it and himself. "I'm a guy who can't say 'No,'" he explains. "I find it hard to say, 'Back off from me—just back off from me.' I could never do that to this day."

Harvey Kurtzman, creator of *Mad* and initiator of the whole cycle of satire comics and magazines, was then editing an effort for Jim Warren (subsequently publisher of *Eerie*, *Creepy*, etc.) called *Help!*. It depended less on cartoons than on humorously captioned photos, but Kurtzman nevertheless bought "Fritz Comes on Strong." At first, the soon-to-be originator of "Little Annie Fanny" found it too sexy to print! But, when Robert showed up jobless in New York, the master put the neophyte to work, helping assistant Terry Gilliam (later of Monty Python fame) with *Help!* production chores. He also sent Robert up to sketch Harlem, and to pose for a *Help!* fumeur (as an ill-at-ease partygoer).

Robert, predictably, was intimidated by the big town and by the big-time commercial art world. He didn't see much of Kurtzman, who was "the guy on the go—he'd treat me like a kid. I didn't think I had the skills to get involved in that scene."

The only significant art hookup he made in New York that summer was, oddly, at a quick-draw portrait gallery in Greenwich Village. "It was run by a sleazy joker who also had one in Atlantic City." The idea was to haul in tourists off the street and sketch them. "$2.50 for a five-minute profile, $5 for full face; charcoal on gray paper with white highlights . . . I was fascinated by how it worked, and I said, 'Can I get a job in here?'"

There was an opening at the Atlantic City gallery, and Robert left the hot metropolis and went for it. This was the summer of the Democratic convention, and the Boardwalk was already filling up with visitors with money in their pockets. Robert went to work at once, even though the *alter kocker* who owned the place preferred young girls, regardless of sketching talent. "He'd hire them and be nice to them—give them 'first chair' next to the door. Gradually he'd realize he wasn't getting anywhere with them and he'd start treating them like shit. If you lost favor in Ike's eyes, you got moved to the back. Finally they'd get fed up and leave and he'd hire new ones."

If customers didn't like their portraits, they didn't have to pay ("Old ladies gave us the most trouble"), and Robert had problems at first getting likenesses. Soon, however, as at American Greetings, he found unexpected help and camaraderie from his fellow workers. Besides Ike's girls, they were a raffish lot: "An old, washed-up English artist, who drank—really a good artist . . . A real sardonic junkie, about 30, who said, 'If I didn't hafta draw 'em, I'd spit on 'em.'" Robert was guided by a young Puerto Rican about his age, "an amazing talent. Perfect likeness in a graceful line came very easy to him."

Ike had an assistant, "this other middle-aged monster named Andy that had a steel plate in his head. He'd sit by the front of the gallery and make lewd comments at every woman that went by on the Boardwalk."

Robert found the fading early-century glitz of 1964 Atlantic City "very rich, with the old elegant hotels, the rolling chairs . . ." In

the gallery and on the Boardwalk he found himself, for the first time, meeting and talking freely with girls. "Something in my head changed . . . It hit me between the eyes that women were accessible." Dana seemed far away.

As the convention time approached, Robert left the portrait gallery and hooked up with a caricaturist who had wangled a spot inside the hall. During the near-riot over the attempted seating of the Mississippi Freedom Democrats, he watched the cops threaten Norman Mailer, then grab him and haul him out. Later, Robert went up and talked to Mailer, until "this beautiful blonde came up and he quickly ignored me."

The conventioneers had bucks and doing $5 caricatures was much easier than portraits. But Robert's palmy days ended fast. In August he met a girl he felt especially attracted to, "a thoughtful girl with glasses but also physically my type. . . .I was walking on the Boardwalk holding hands with her in the moonlight, and then suddenly, completely out of the blue, there was Dana.

"She was leaning on the railing, looking at the ocean. When I saw her I immediately let go of this girl's hand—I was so guilt-ridden—and this girl just walked out of my life. I never saw her again."

A determined Dana simply took him over and hauled him straight back to Cleveland. A few weeks later they were married at Dana's suburban church. Robert's parents were among the uncomfortable guests that evening, and he was reminded of a prediction his father had made. "We used to argue when I was living at home. I'd say, 'I'm never gonna get married,' and he'd say, 'Aah, you'll marry the first one that comes along.' He pegged me for a desperate, pathetic character—and he was right."

Robert felt her family had a hand in pushing the wilting Dana into marriage. There was a poignant moment in the Hotel Cleveland, where her parents had rented them a wedding-night suite, when "Dana burst out crying, saying, 'I don't want to be married.' She suddenly realized what she'd done." But this instant of panic passed, and for the next nine years Dana followed Robert everywhere that he couldn't avoid her.

First came Europe. The summer's travels had reignited the old Kerouacian on-the-road wanderlust that Robert had once shared with brother Charles; they'd never taken off on their fantasized cross-country trek, but Robert now had more self-confidence and was rapidly losing his lifelong fear of new people and new situations. "I thought Europe would be better than America. I might even live there."

In September, Robert arranged a free-lance-by-mail setup with American Greetings: They would send him Hi Brow card ideas, he would send them back finished art, they would send him payments of around $25 per card—enough, he figured, for a frugal but secure living at the 1964 rate of exchange. As a going-away present, his Hi Brow cronies gave him an enormous, thick, hard-bound book of blank art paper. In the following months it was destined to be filled with the visualized wanderings of another questing '60s rover: Fritz the Cat.

They crossed on a Swedish freighter that took nine days, pursued by storms, to make Le Havre. Dana suffered from seasickness, then from culture shock; first in London, then in Zurich, where she had friends from her years as a camp counselor. But Europe fascinated Robert, particularly Zurich with its "quaintness, smallness of scale. . .Old buildings. . .Trolleys from 1900, absolutely pristine condition." The Crumbs' hosts were a traditional Swiss family who dressed for dinner and gave a little musical recital afterwards. They treated Robert and Dana to a day in the mountains, with Lederhosen, chalet, hot chocolate, and accordion music.

Deciding to spend the winter in Switzerland, they heard about a cheap guesthouse in Locarno, and Robert took off alone to check it out, riding across the Alps, down serpentine mountain roads, and through fairytale villages behind an insane Italian motorcyclist. Frau Etter, the Crumbs' landlady for the next several months, was an old alcoholic Bohemian who had been all over Europe in the 1920s and '30s, until the Nazis killed her husband, a hero of the Danish resistance. In the hills above lived her friend Swerzmann, an ancient sculptor with fierce blue eyes blazing out from under his ever-present broad-brimmed hat, and over his flowing white whiskers. Swerzmann was a Communist and the front yard of his hut had

an enormous forearm and clenched fist coming out of the ground. His place was filled with naive-surreal, cartoonlike objects he'd carved, like a tank in the form of a German helmet with a skull sticking out of the turret. Robert was captivated by these strange creations, and Swerzmann, who spoke no English, liked Robert's sketchbooks. "He was 90-something."

Locarno was filled with "rich people, artists, and old guys wearing berets" who mostly sat around the cafés. Robert couldn't make connection with them and spent the winter *chez* Etter, drawing in "the big book." Newly married, in a strange land thousands of miles from America, he collated the confusion of inspirations and images that both attracted and repelled him about his native country, its inhabitants, and himself: the beatniks and bourgeois, folkers and rockers, blacks and radicals, poets and potheads. He conjured the lure of The Road, big fast cars, hitchhiking, bumming the railroads, crashing parties; even the understated narrow-tie coat of the JFK/LBJ-era government secret agents of paperback and television glory.

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Fritz became a picaresque, nine-lived stand-in for Robert himself, enjoying the adventures his creator had only dreamed of in envious fantasy. Fritz was a glib talker, master of any situation, while Robert saw himself as tongue-tied and tense. Fritz was a ladies' man, a heartbreaker, while Robert until recently had been a very reluctant virgin. Fritz was the center of a circle of friends and admirers; Robert, a loner. Fritz was the instigator for any kind of prank or spree, with no moral or ethical hangups; Robert suffered under a quarryload of familial inhibitions and Catholic guilt-trips.

But Robert's own satirical claws were out for Fritz. The cat was a poseur: as struggling student, sensitive *artiste*, self-assured cocksman, stemwinder salesman, even CIA operative supreme. His posturing was taken seriously by others because, first of all, Fritz took it seriously himself. However, Robert saw to it that this egotistic role-playing kept Fritz in hot water. Barrels of it. In "Fritz Bugs Out," "Special Agent for the CIA," and the slightly later college student story, Fritz runs away with the show. One day, Robert would make sure that the upstaging feline got his.

Robert's drawing technique was rolling

ahead at the same time, as fast as one of Fritz's stolen cars. For years he had stuck with using ordinary lead pencil, being intimidated by brushes and croquille pens. But now a Rapidograph mechanical fountain drawing pen, which he mastered at American Greetings, accompanied him everywhere. The rigid point gave him the thin, flowing line seen in "Fritz" and his other 1964-1966 work, and also inspired the heavy —almost obsessive—parallel vertical shading lines. "It was a gimmick," Robert admits, "and it really looks stupid to me now. It made the whole shading thing seem very simple: rather than having to do crosshatching." The verticals could be drawn in almost like applying a mechanical gray, such as Zip-a-tone. Used sparingly, this could be effective, even charming; but it could also make roads and other dark surfaces look wet, distort textures, and confuse backgrounds and foregrounds.

"Shading took me years to get down the way I wanted," says Robert. "During the hippie era, when I had that kind of revivalist big-foot style, shading became very minimal. Then, when I started to come out of that, I once again got very interested in Thomas Nast." Robert considers Nast, the seminal 19th-Century political cartoonist and originator of the Democratic donkey, Republican elephant, and modern Santa Claus, as the all-time master of crosshatching. "In the mid-'70s I tried really hard to learn that. I actually think I got pretty good at it by 1980."

At some point during this isolated but busy winter, a letter arrived from Harvey Kurtzman with an intriguing assignment. Somewhere he'd heard Bulgaria described as "just like *1984*," and he thought, since Robert was in the neighborhood (approximately), he could just pop over and sketch the horrors of Communism as he'd handled Harlem the previous summer. By now Robert was feeling housebound and ready for a new adventure, so he and Dana made quits with Frau Eiter and headed for Milano, where they caught the Orient Express.

They shared most of the trip with a third-class carful of Turkish emigrant workers, celebrating as they returned home, their pockets full of Deutschmarks. When the engine crossed into Yugoslavia, time began to turn backward, and as they detrained at Sofia they seemed to be in a 19th-Century Dostoevski novel. "It was so funky. There were no signs of wealth—there never had been any money there." Nor were there tourists, or, to Dana's horror, many English-speakers.

"I liked the way it was there a lot," says Robert. "It was really appealing." He was eager to explore the snowy streets on foot, but Dana just wanted to stay in the hotel room. Robert remembers the big drinking halls ("everywhere the reek of garlic"), and a ballroom orchestra ("straight out of the 1920s") playing Straussian light classics in the pre-war salon manner. At one point, the

Crumb wandered into what turned out to be the national art school, where an English-speaking student showed them around and persuaded Robert to describe the latest American trends in abstract expressionism.

For the *Help!* article, Robert drew many more sketches than were printed. Kurtzman liked the art but felt there weren't enough gags. So Robert scratched his head and came up with captions mostly based on the conventional anti-U. mantras of the time.

At this point, Robert and Dana somehow found themselves in Copenhagen, and were possibly the only two people in that happy city to be [illegible]. An accounting glitch had delayed the paycheck from AG, and they haunted the streets swiping food from stands and enjoying wonderful Danes [illegible] down sausages. They looked for a cheap run-down area to live at their sub-poverty level, but found to their frustration that Copenhagen has no slums.

Besides the Bulgarian project, Robert finished "Special Agent for the CIA" in Denmark as well as "The Silly Pigeons," an autobiographical series of gag strips, plus, for Dana, various little books and drawings. "I love comics," sappy stuff I did just to cater to her taste." Dana retains this unpublished material, of which Robert remarks, "Never mind, it's too embarrassing anyway."

Much as Robert liked Europe, he saw that to depend on checks from Cleveland was to tempt famine. So, as soon as the back pay came through, he and Dana caught the first thing icelandic Airways could lift to the States—and thence to Cleveland once more and American Greetings.

But something seemed different in that spring of '68. "I remember when I came back to America things had changed since I'd been gone. That whole hipster counter-culture thing had coalesced even more and was moving even faster. In America there was a feeling of excitement in the air. It was about a month and a half after that I first took LSD."

LSD at the time was such a generally unknown substance that the government hadn't even gotten around to making it illegal. Dana got LSD from her psychiatrist on a [illegible] says Robert, who recalls its strength and purity. "I went to work speechless the next day."

Robert met up with marijuana a short time later, through an Art Frahm hanger-on named Mimi. "I remember her lighting up a joint and saying, 'Crumb, I'm going to turn you on.' Actually, Robert was more turned on by Mimi's pubescent teenage sister, Alix, who lived with their "awful" parents in a well-to-do enclave east of Cleveland. Their relationship featured a lot of wrestling and giggling. Any morning Alix might call up American Greetings and tell Robert, "I stayed home from school today." He would ditch AG and take the slow Red-Car coach out to Cedar Road, to hang out and dodge cops. (I'll 3.5 p.m. or bus downtown to Gene's Funny House on East Ninth and take goofy photos in the three-for-25¢ booth. "It was fairly innocent," Robert insists—"but that was."

Less innocent, particularly from Dana's viewpoint, was his involvement with Bobbie, a Heights High girl whom I had come up with. It was his first behind-the-wife's-back infidelity, and when he compulsively confessed, there were "weepings and moanings all around."

Perhaps Bobbie, and other women from Robert's growing circle of friends, were the reason Dana was willing once again to pull up stakes in August, when Robert got another call from Harvey Kurtzman summoning him once more to the Big Town. As for Robert, he had shaken the notion of being a professional comic artist, but couldn't "connive or plan" anything else. ("I still

can't think more than a few days ahead. I don't know what I'm gonna be doing next week. After I took LSD, the whole idea of any kind of career seemed completely absurd.")

Nevertheless, Robert was "completely thrilled at the idea of working with Kurtzman." Gilbert had left, and Robert was confident he could replace him as assistant on *Help!*. "I jumped at that chance." They arrived in New York City on a hot day, and found a claustrophobic one-room studio in Yorkville. Then he dropped by the *Help!* office—to learn that the magazine that very day had folded.

"Jim Warren just pulled the plug," Robert remembers. "I think Kurtzman was tired of trying to edit a magazine." By this time, too, he was involved with Hugh Hefner and *Playboy* on "Lusty Annie Fanny." "He was all jazzed up about that *Playboy* thing," says Robert—not just the money, but the entire sex-and-status dreamworld that the publication held out to males of the post-World War II generation.

Kurtzman was my hero," Robert says. "I used to go out to dinner at his house a lot. Hanging out with him was very instructive: he showed me a lot of techniques, and how the whole thing worked."

Kurtzman also felt responsible for Robert and Dana's being in New York, and began finding him jobs. One was directly in hand-drawing and painting backgrounds for "Annie Fanny." At this time, several former EC Comics artists—including Jack Davis, Russ Heath, and Frank Frazetta—were assisting Kurtzman and Will Eisner on the feature. Robert "slaved on the style and watercolors" for a couple weeks, but just couldn't cut it. He reserves his greatest technical praise for Frazetta: "doing Annie Fanny's body—that's the best Annie Fanny ever looked."

Eisner didn't know anything about female anatomy. She looked like an inflatable doll. But Kurtzman said Hefner didn't like Frazetta's Annie Fanny. "It was too realistic, the blue veins on the tits and all. This one panel you see the bottom half of her body under water. Frazetta made the effect of light coming through the water and that ripple lighting effect on her skin. It was so beautifully lusciously done."

Other job leads also fell through, or resulted in minimal work for minuscule compensation. Jerry De Fuccio at *Mad* looked over Robert's portfolio, but told him they didn't need new artists just then. A day spent assisting Jack Davis with storyboards for TV commercials was another strikeout: Robert was too slow for one of the reputed fastest pens in the cartooning world. Kurtzman's tip about *Yeh!* magazine (a fifth-rate *Mad* imitation) got Robert an interview with "a couple old Jewish guys in some seedy office" who eyeballed his sketchbook, picked out some drawings of weird customized guitars, and had him redraw them ("Pay was for shit") on a [illegible] here.

What kept Robert afloat during this New York sojourn was a series of assignments from another Kurtzman contact, Woody Gelman of Topps bubble gum cards' art studio. Gelman had animated for the Fleischer Films in the 1930s and drawn kiddie comic books (*Jungle Jungle*) for Famous Funnies in the 1940s. As head of Topps' creative department, he was in charge of layout, production, stripping, color separations, and so forth, for sports cards as well as for such series as "Mars Attacks," and the more lighthearted joke sets (like "Monster Greetings," the one he assigned Robert).

Despite the subterranean reputation of gum-card art, standards at Topps were high. "All the big-name cartoonists have gone

through there. Robert claims, on the way up or way down. When Robert's cards were [illegible] that [illegible] cards [illegible] turning my style, but making everything [illegible]

Topps' art department was located in their ancient factory on Brooklyn's waterfront, and [illegible] way to back out the cards ("the backs of the cards had five models in monster makeup with [illegible] book rising his sappiest greeting-card style). "The whole neighborhood [illegible] her watching them make it, coming fresh gum right out of the vat. It was good."

[illegible] every kid's dream. The art department was a bleak factory room covered with a century [illegible] dog permanent artists were like a bunch of refugees from Auschwitz. So depressed [illegible] pressure hair, before today's wider market for his material had developed. "The Small Small Businessmen" was part of one of these [illegible] and beautifully-evoked picture of a Depression-era New York neighborhood, using a [illegible] race for Robert, but which he developed much more fully in the 1980s. But he hated [illegible] proud of it now. At the New York Public Library he spent hours for a [illegible] researching Gelman projects (i.e. the Harry Thaw murder case), cranking microfilms in darkened stalls until he grew nauseous and had to stop.

I was getting the impression very quick in New York that you could work like a dog, but if you didn't get out of the low level, you could live in some shithole of a place and [illegible] way over what I thought I was capable of handling. I just didn't have [illegible]

The longer Robert worked in New York and the more LSD he took, the more he saw [illegible] walked hopelessly by files of desperately

[illegible] dreamers. Robert: I still had a dream you could be a comic artist with some promise held out. But I didn't want a house in [illegible] Topps was the [illegible]

Nevertheless, on his own time, at the Yorkville apartment, and then in the East [illegible] and Avenue A), where he and Dana moved in late 1965, Robert continued to create his own comics. He began thinking of [illegible] where. The new *Fritz* story was drawn more professionally on separate sheets of Strathmore paper. Eventually it appeared in *Help!* [illegible] underground comic book idea. The cover *Fritz* is published here for the first time. The "Roberta" page was a brief attempt at developing a relatively conventional character he'd created for American Greetings [illegible]

In the East Village he bought the local hippie paper, the [illegible] and got a charge out of Bill Beckman's *Capsule High*, "the first underground or hippie-type comic strip I ever saw. The significance should be obvious."

He broke into *EVO* himself on a rounds [illegible] the newspaper and redrawn over them and filled out the women's figures. They were [illegible] somehow they ended up in the *EVO*.

It was really beginning to look like the [illegible] started: MacDougal Street was overrun with [illegible] and Bob Dylan cops. "I used to go down to the Village and hang around there [illegible] houses like the Figurs, but I just couldn't [illegible] of the rest of it, but there were all these girls [illegible]

[illegible] Robert: I had [illegible] ers had come East to catch onto the burgeoning scene, including Bobbie. The old affair [illegible]

One thing they did share, along with most [illegible] her way into a job in the pharmacy of Roosevelt Hospital, where everyone from doctors [illegible] and sit up up all night talking.

It was one of these sessions that involved the famous "fuzzy acid" which was to prove [illegible] it on him, then called a couple days later and [illegible] ing, but Robert swallowed it anyway.

That night, as his high peaked, he came to a decision. "I said, 'It's now or never. I'm going to tell her.' 'This is it. I'm leaving.' She freaked out. She went to the bathroom and vomited violently. Finally, she came out, pushed me down on the couch and sat on me, and told me I wasn't going anywhere. I said, 'Well, you can't keep me here forever, you know?'"

Dana finally agreed to go back to Cleveland [illegible] ical. She had this chicken soup left over and it was real bitter tasting. I spit it out and [illegible] she admitted she put thirty sleeping pills in the chicken soup.

She packed up her stuff and put the two [illegible] carrying case, and I put her on the plane to Cleveland that day.

[illegible] "confused, lost, and miserable." He was free of Dana, but he [illegible] "I kept having dreams about Dana, seeing her weeping face in my dreams."

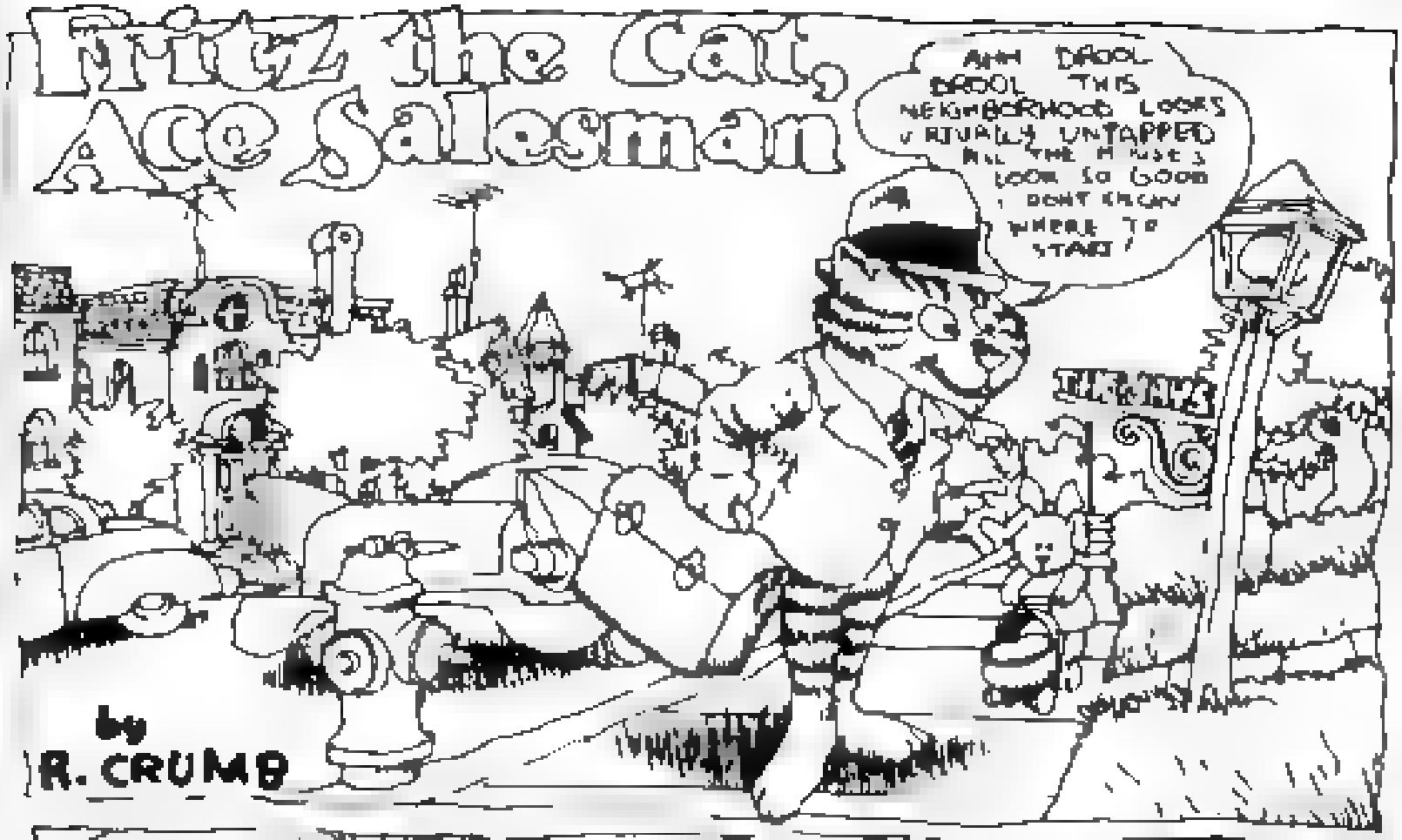
It was a [illegible] January. After [illegible] him, but suspecting a strange progression of drawings in his sketchbook, Robert grew [illegible]

[illegible] Bobbie. I left her house at dawn. When I got to the subway, I was still high on LSD. People were crowded around the entrance and they were all peering down the stairs. I looked down [illegible] tom of the stairs, sprawled out, and police examining her. Evidently she was dead.

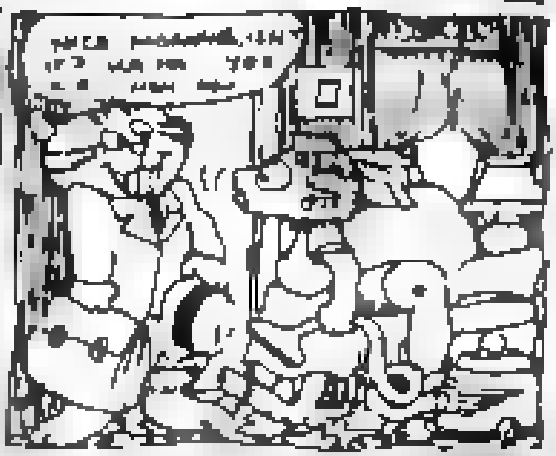
[illegible] that I had to get out of New York.

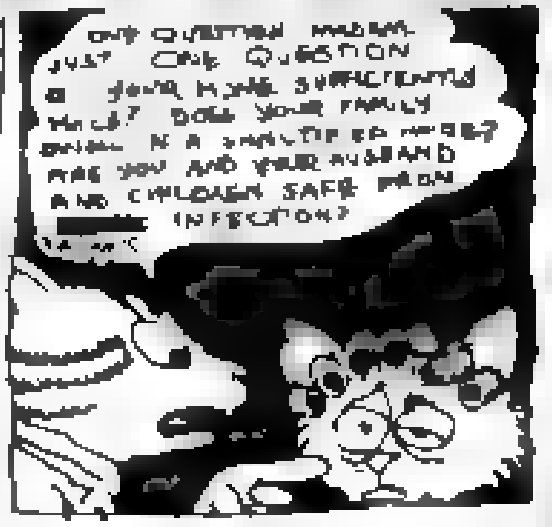
Robert left New York with a head full of guilt and acid fuzz, and under his arm a [illegible]

Fritz the Cat, Ace Salesman



by R. CRUMB





NOW, THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MINUTE, MADAM. THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.. THIS IS NO EVERY DAY ORDINARY SALES PITCH I'M GIVING YOU!
WHILE YOU'RE THINKING, LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT "GOD INCORPORATED"
NOW YOU KNOW THAT IN THIS DAY AND AGE WHEN WE'RE ALL SO CAUGHT UP IN THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE MODERN SCHEME OF HURRY HURRY HURRY THAT, WELL MOST OF US FORGET TO TAKE TIME OUT NOW AND THEN...
ADMIT IT THE TRUTH!
YOU KNOW THIS YOURSELF, I'M SURE, MADAM. DON'T YOU SOMETIMES FIND THAT YOU'VE JUST COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOUR DUTIES TO THAT GOOD OLD LITTLE GUY UP THERE HMMMM?
WELL, HE HASN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOU!
SO, THE PEOPLE AT "GOD INCORPORATED" CAME UP WITH A WONDERFUL IDEA TO SAVE YOU TIME AND KEEP THE MAN UPSTAIRS HAPPY TOO!
IT'S A NEW MIRACLE OF AUTOMATION! A WONDERFUL DEVICE WHICH COMBINES THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES WITH THE FINEST KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEN OF FAITH!
...NEW EASY-TO-USE 'SANCT-O-SPRAY'!
YOU JUST PUSH THIS LITTLE BUTTON...IT'S AS EASY AS THAT, AND-WOOSH! - YOUR HOUSE IS AS HOLY AS A CHURCH!

YOU CAN FEEL THE DIFFERENCE ALREADY, CAN'T YOU, MADAM? NOW OUR NEW INTRODUCTORY OFFER WILL MEAN BIG SAVINGS FOR YOU!
WE'LL GIVE YOU... UH WELL... UH...
WHAT'S
NATALIE!
NATALIE! DON'T BE SO RUDE! TURN OFF THAT TV AND GET OUT OF THE LIVING ROOM
GO ON! GET OUT! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M TALKING TO THIS MAN?
OH.
THUD!
WAAH! WAAH! WAAH!
THAT NATALIE. HEH HEH... SOMETIMES SHE'S JES A PAIN! A REAL PAIN.
YOUR DAUGHTER, TAKE IT?
UH... YEAH THAT NATALIE! SHE'S A REAL PAIN SOME TIMES!
MADAM, NOW THAT I'VE SHOWN YOU WHAT SANCTO-STRAW CAN DO, HAVE YOU ANY DOUBTS ABOUT IT'S HOLY PURIFYING POWERS?

WELL, IT SEEMS TO BE PRETTY GOOD!
AAH! WELL NOW IF I'M NOT BEING TOO PERSONAL, MADAM PERCEIVE THAT YOU ARE HAVING A PROBLEM HERE WITH YOUR DAUGHTER

OH, YOU'RE NOT KIDDING!
CAN SEE THAT YOU'RE WORRIED THAT SHE MAY BECOME CORRUPT MAY FALL UNDER EVIL INFLUENCES

THAT'S THE TRUTH!
LET SANCT-O-SPRAY END THOSE WORRIES QUICKLY, EASILY. A THOROUGH SPRAYING OF SANCT-O-SPRAY ON YOUR DAUGHTER AND YOUR WORRIES ARE OVER!

OH THAT SOUNDS WONDERFUL!
YOUR DAUGHTER HAS BEEN HERE FOR MONTHS INSOLENT AND SAUCY AS A NEFARIOUS ANNA!

AND BECAUSE I FEEL SUCH STRONG SYMPATHY FOR YOU IN YOUR PLIGHT MADAM I'M WILLING TO GIVE YOU A FREE DEMONSTRATION

OH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO... I'LL BUY SOME!
A WISE DECISION MADAM, YOU WILL NEVER REGRET IT! BUT I MUST SHOW YOU THE CORRECT METHOD!

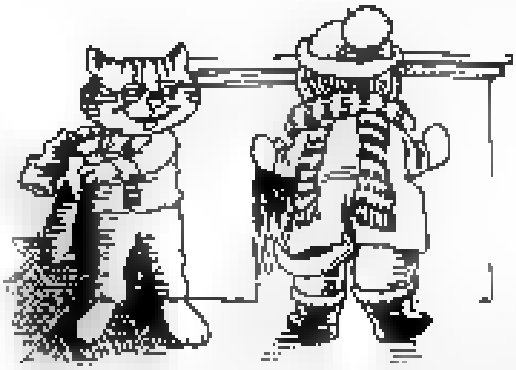
METHOD?
YES... I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO GET THE BEST USE OUT OF YOUR SANCT-O SPRAY.

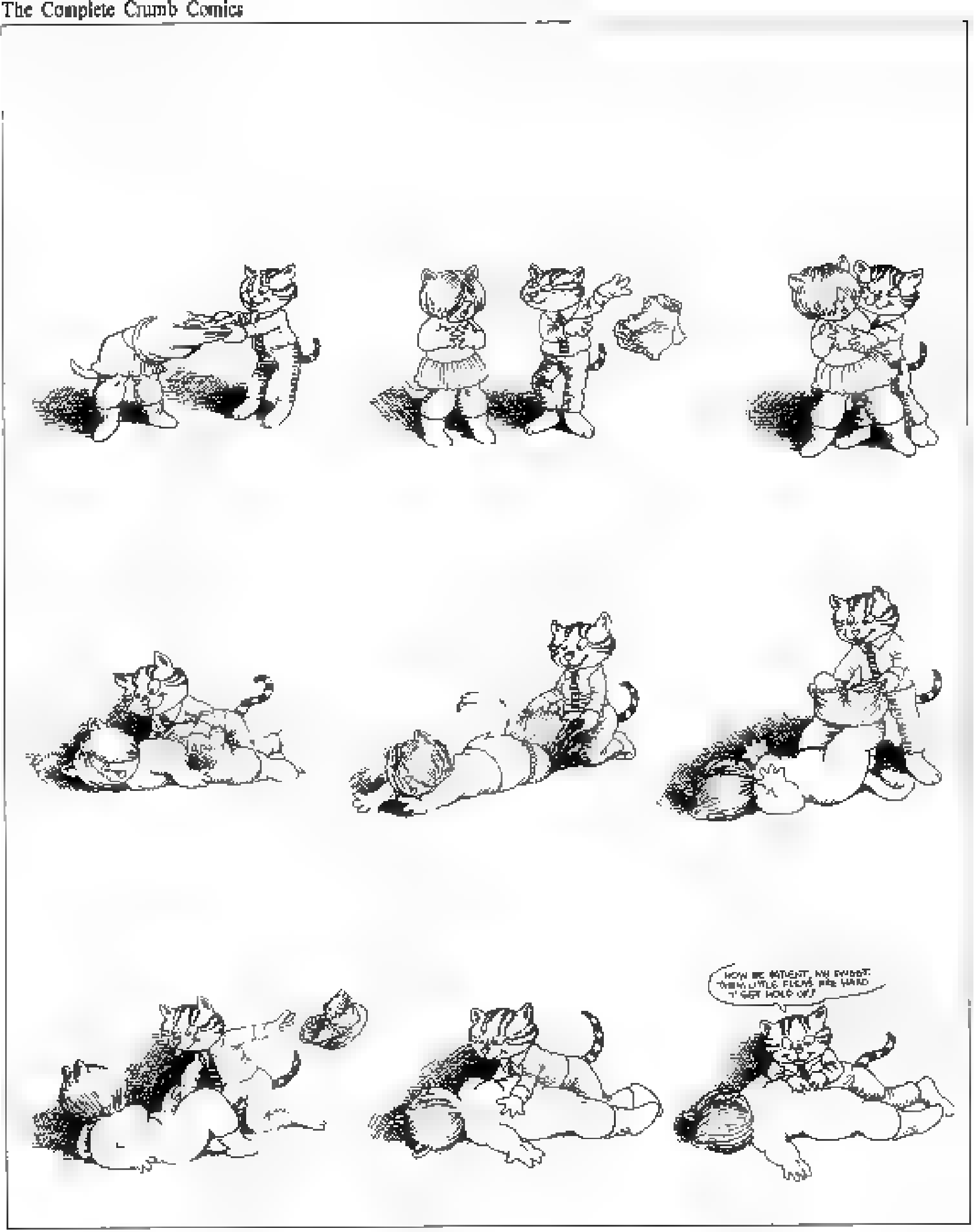
WHY DON'T YOU CALL NATALIE BACK INTO THE ROOM I'LL GIVE HER THE B Z FOR THE BLESSED PURIFICATION SHE NEEDS...
OH THIS IS WONDERFUL!

NATALIE! COME DOWN HERE RIGHT NOW!
HEH HEH HEH

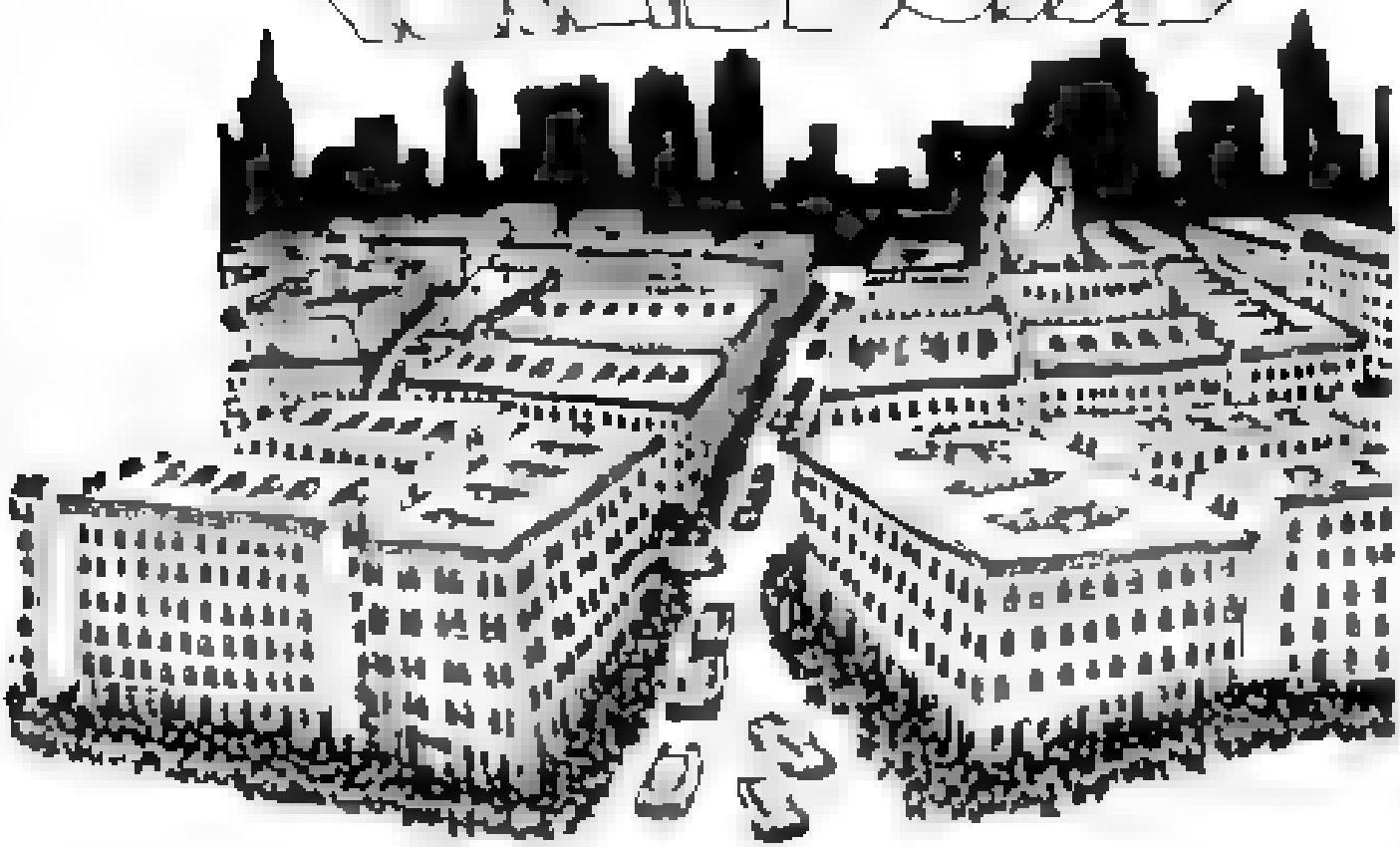
FRITZ THE CAT in

"FRITZ COMES ON STRONG"

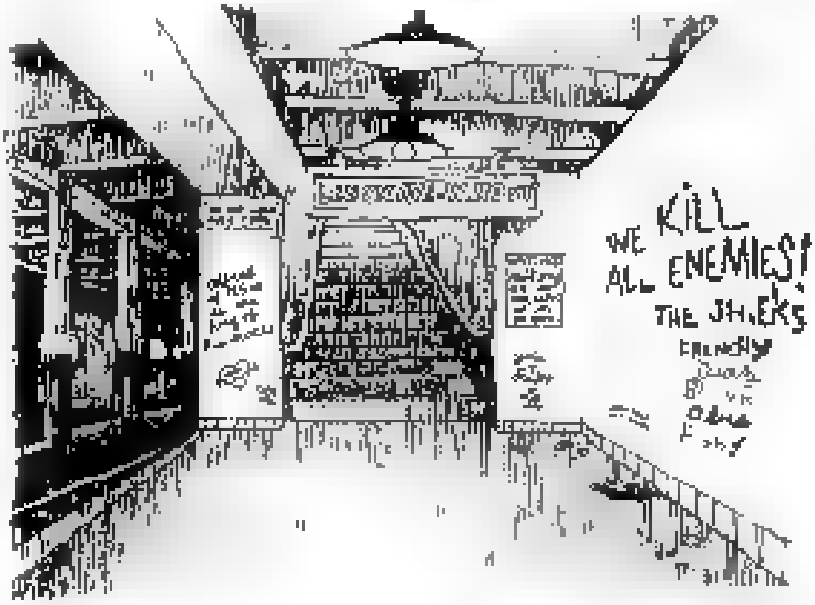



HOW BE PATIENT, MY DYNOSOT. THEM LITTLE FLEAS BE HARD TO GET HOLD OF!

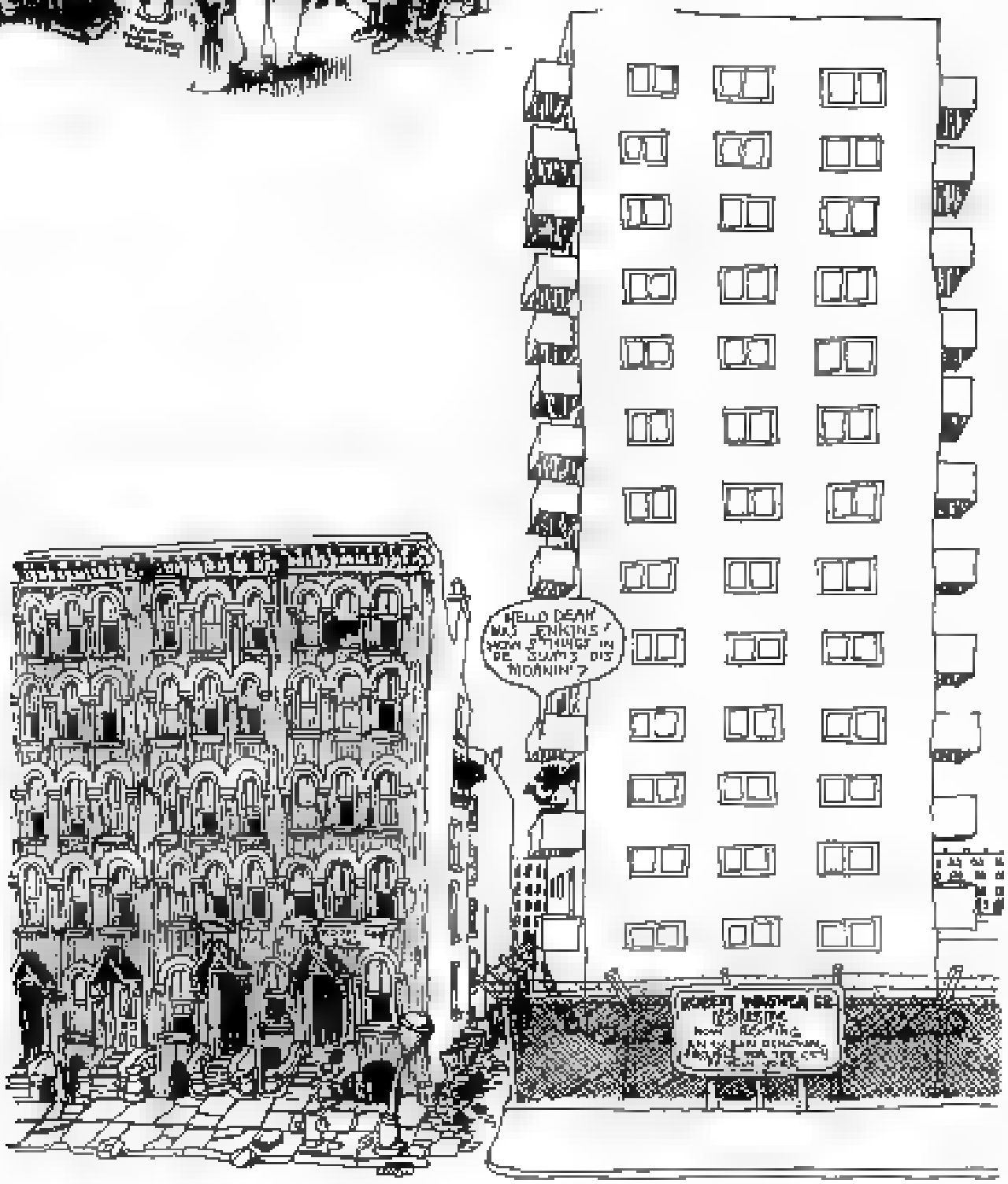
HARLEM

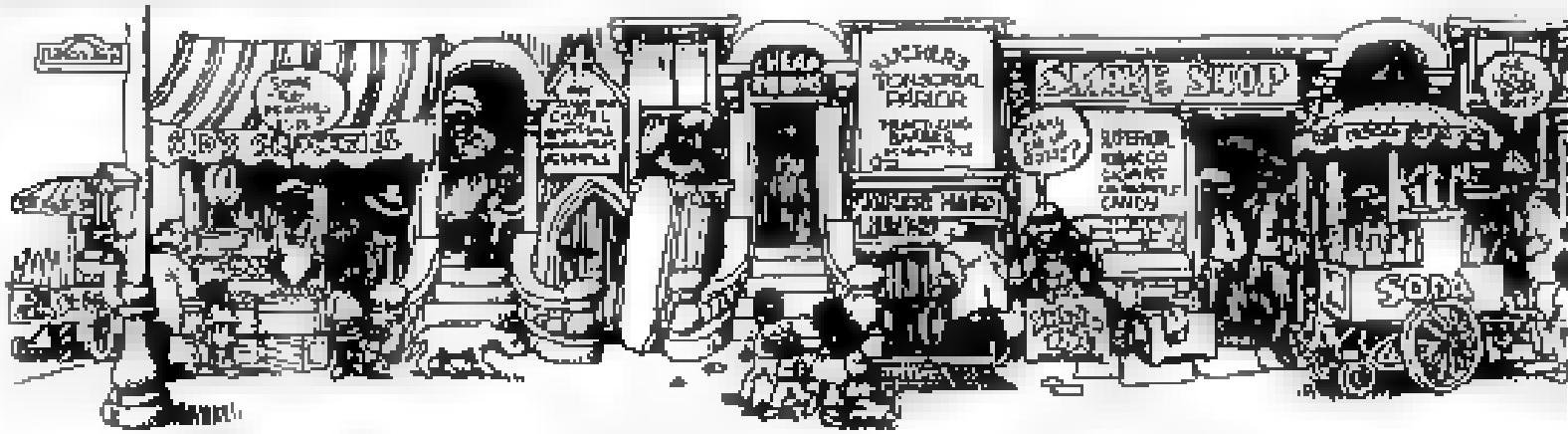


COMING YOUR WAY
AVENUE GOOD FOOD OF LAGUARDIA
TEMPORARY POSTAGE DAMAGE
OF NEW YORK
MAYOR

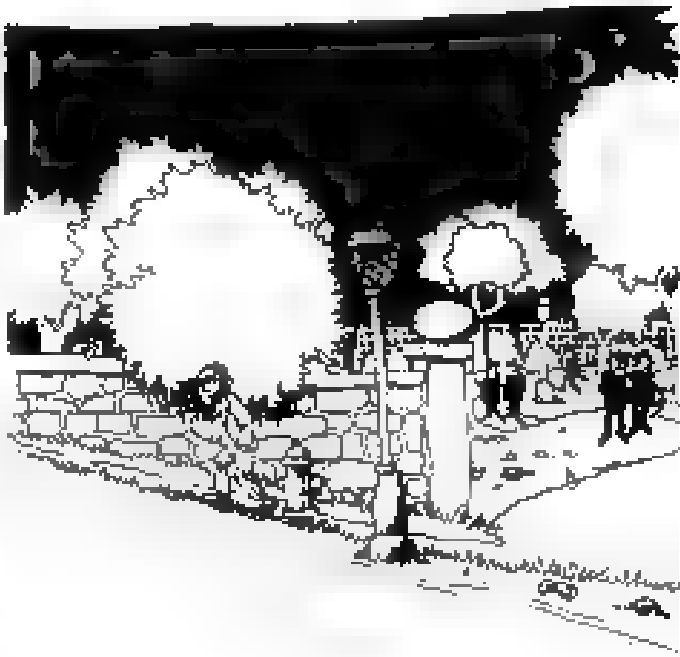

WE KILL ALL ENEMIES!
THE JHEKS

ASTRO BOY
ASTRO BOY
ASTRO BOY

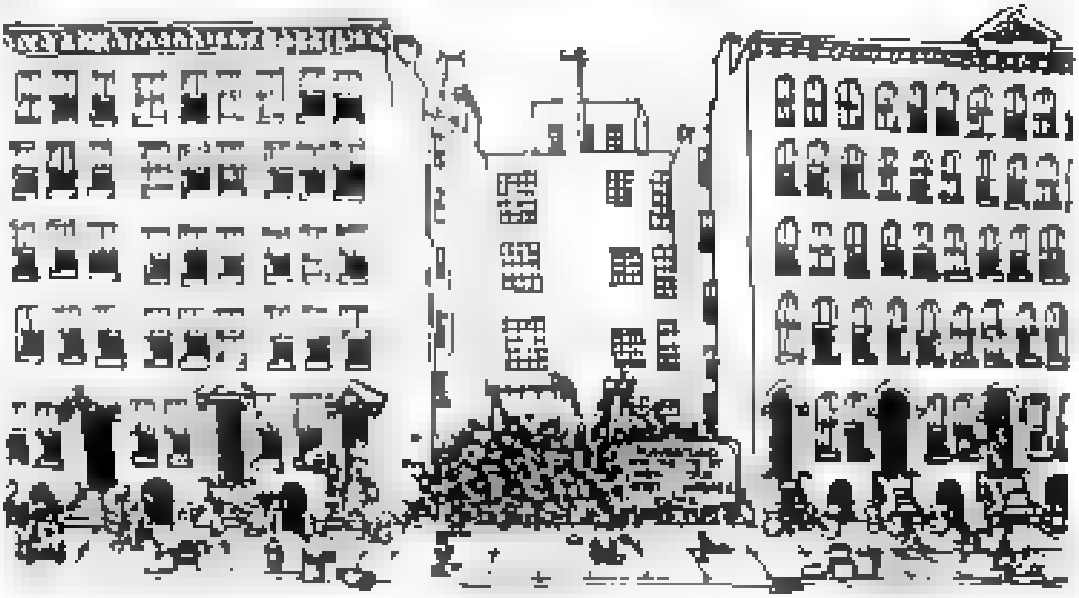

HELLO DEAR MRS. JENKINS! HOW'S THINGS IN DE SLUMS DIS MORNIN'?



A FEW OF THE GANGS OF HARLEM



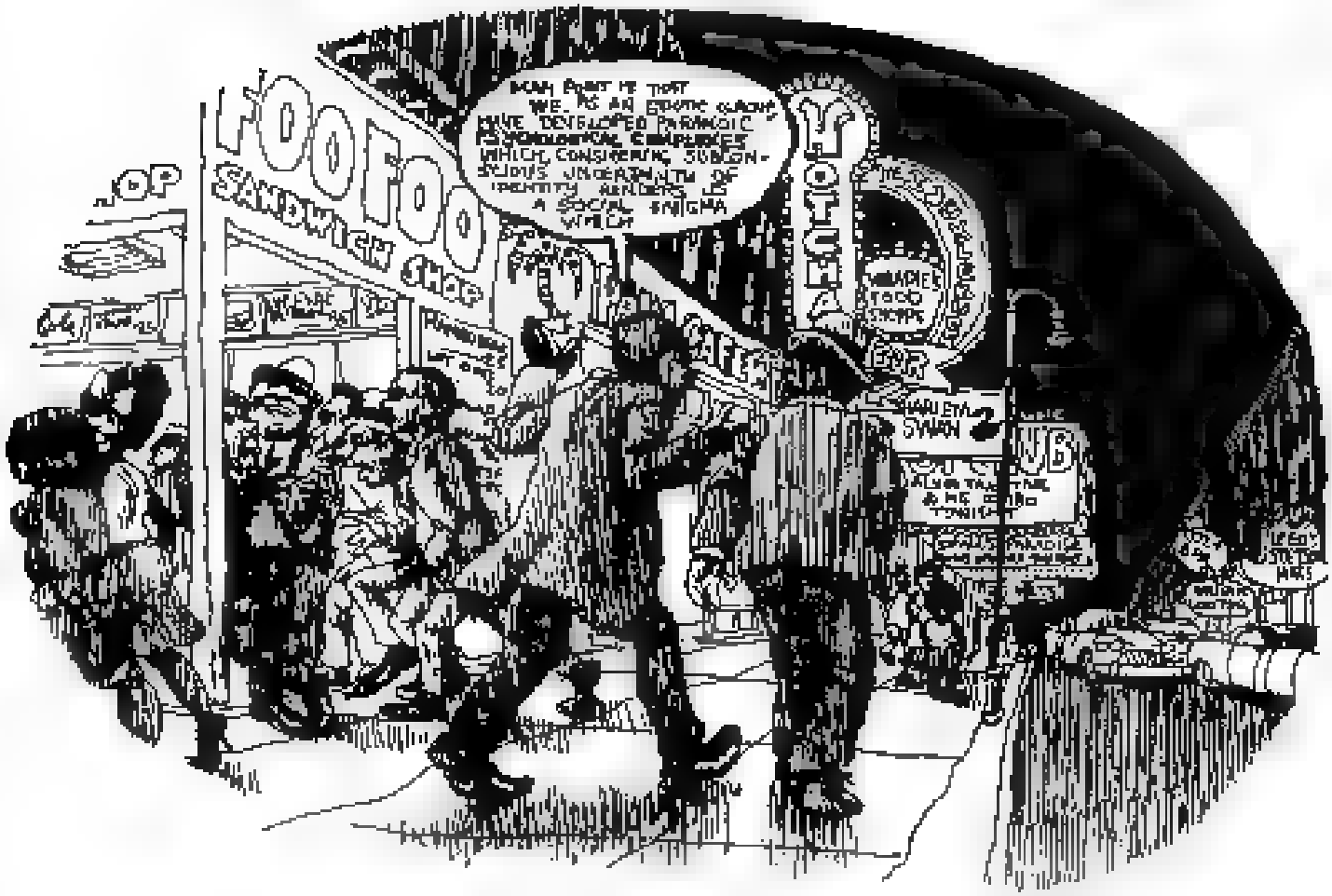
GET OUT OF BALDWIN, WHITE MAN!



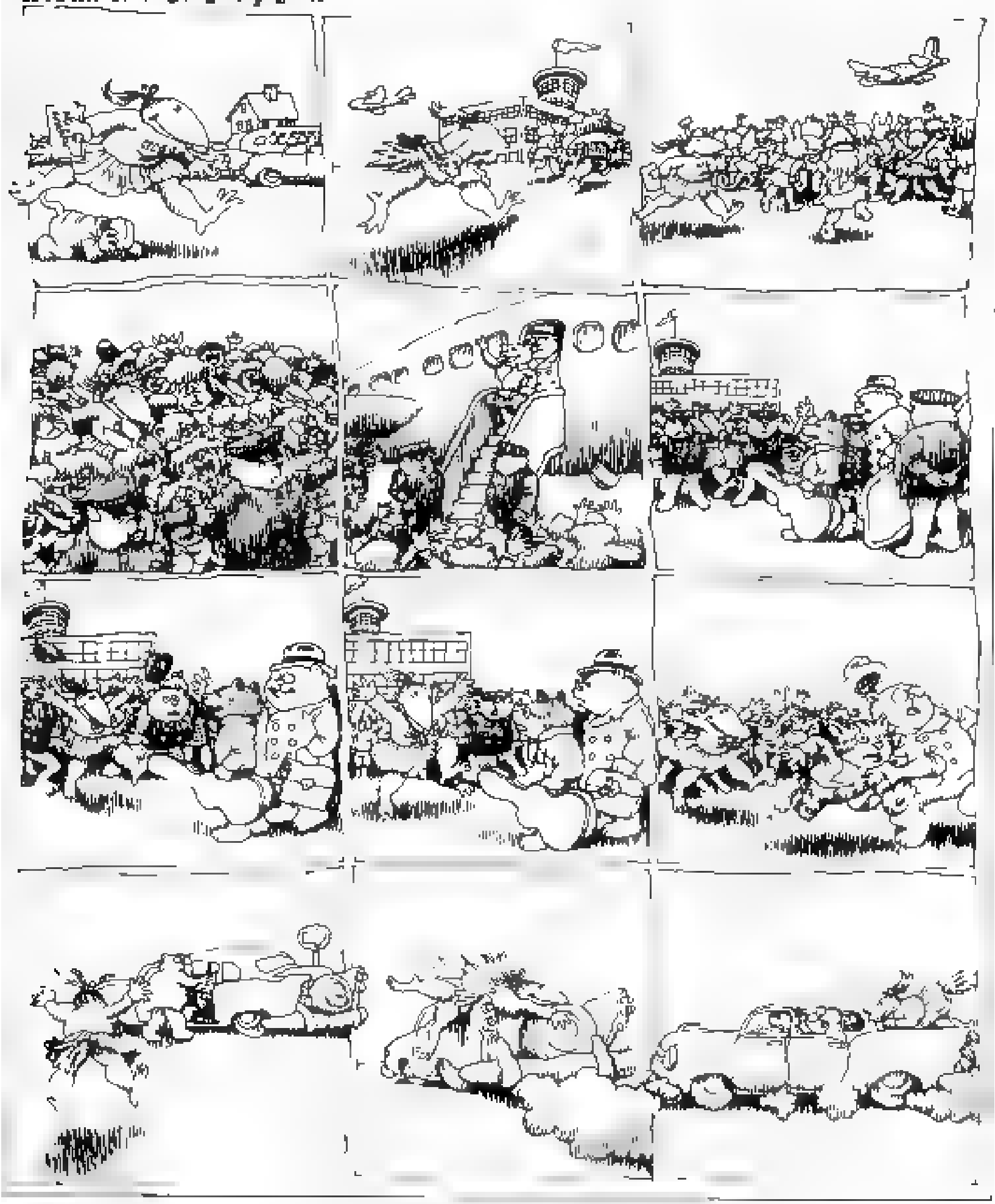
RKO ALHAMBRA
"THE BLOODFEAST"
PROS
THE THRILLERS
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO KILL A MAN
MORE GRISLY THAN EVERIN
NOTHING SO APPALLING IN THE ANNALS OF HORROR!
TICKETS

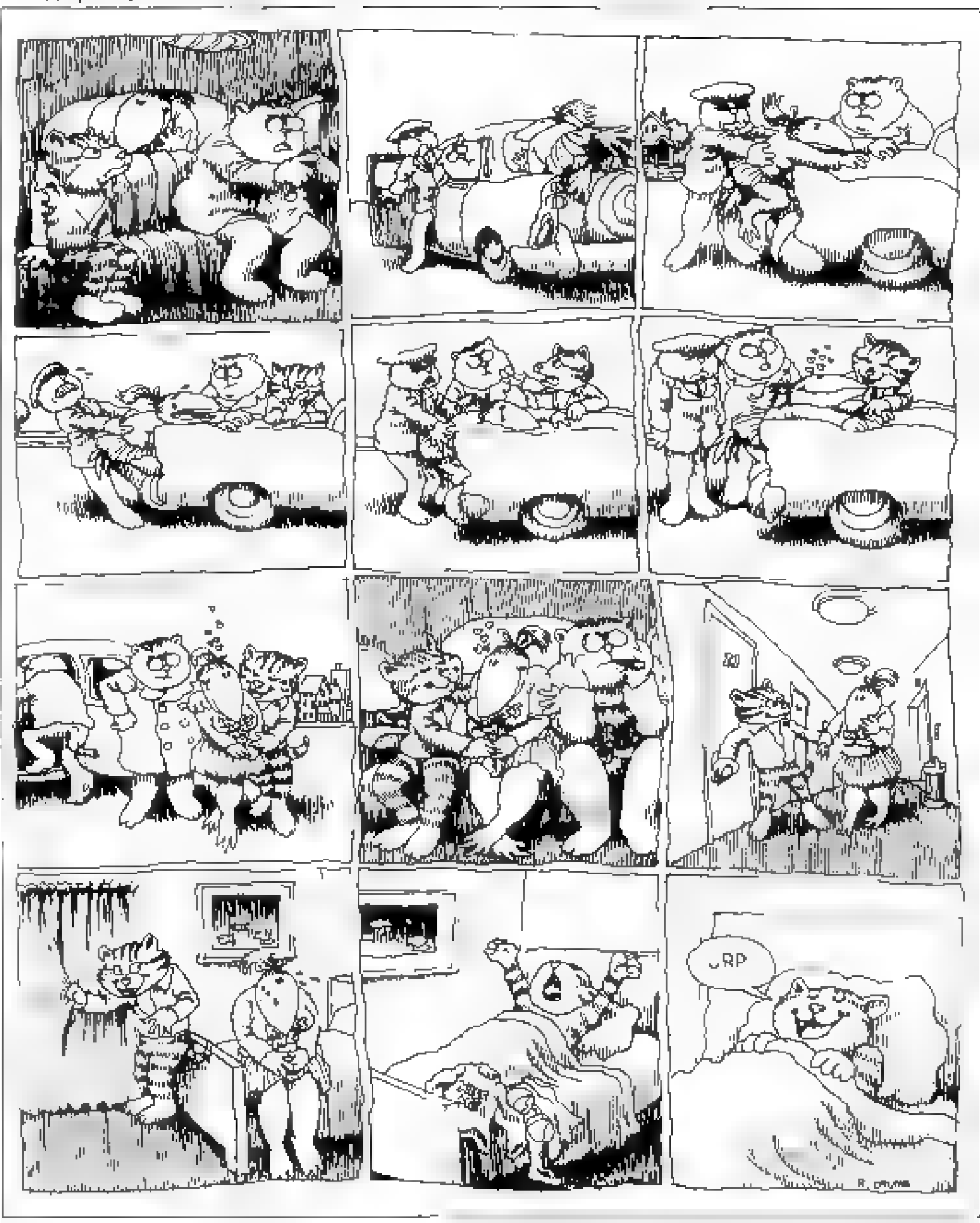
FRESH FRUIT

YOU MUST BE REGISTERED

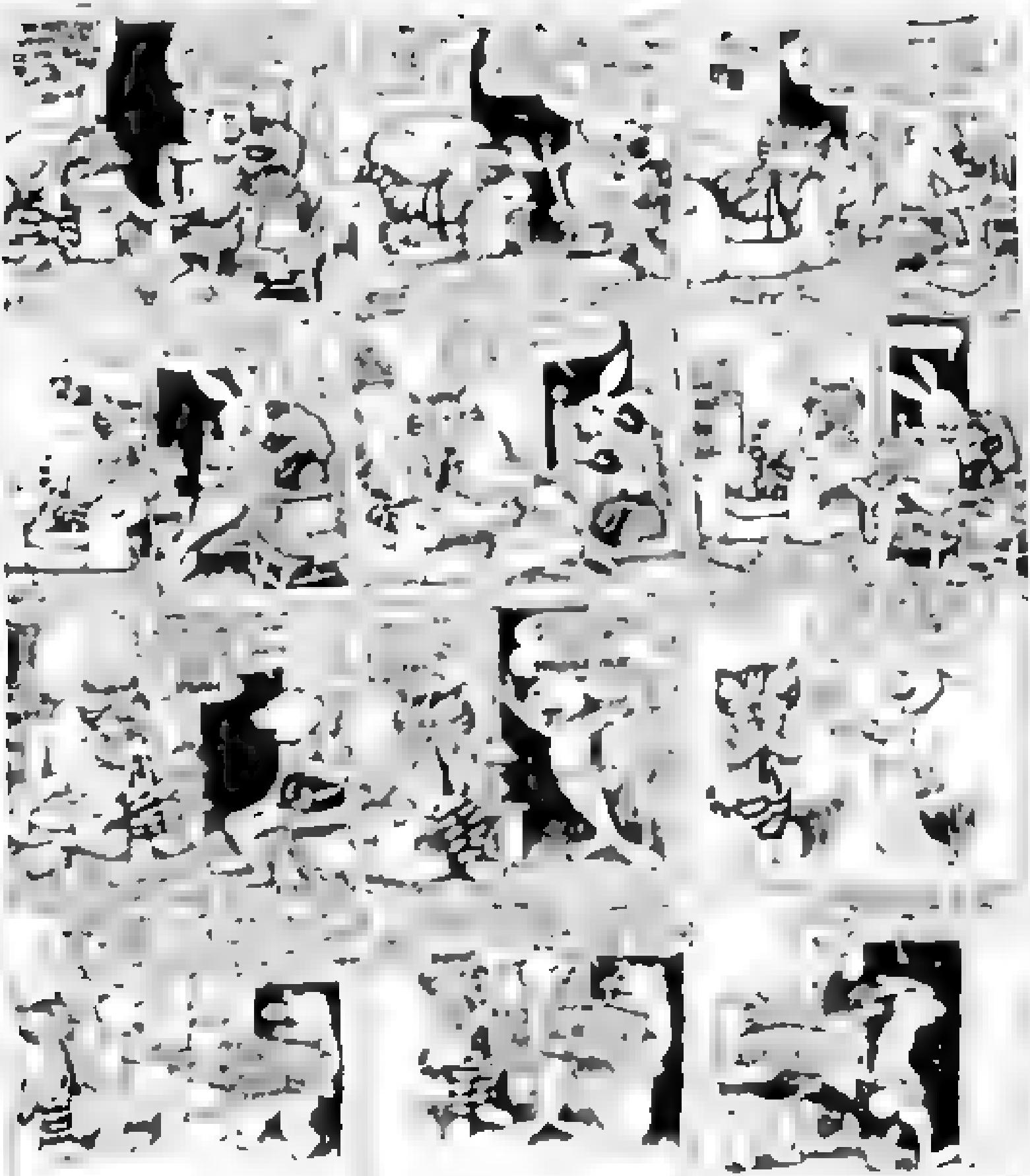

FOOFOO
SANDWICH SHOP
MAN PUT IT THAT WE, AS AN ETHNIC GROUP, HAVE DEVELOPED PARANOID PSYCHOLOGICAL CRIPPLINGS WHICH, CONSIDERING SUBCONSCIOUS UNCERTAINTY OF IDENTITY RENDERS US A SOCIAL STIGMA WHICH
CAFE
SWAN

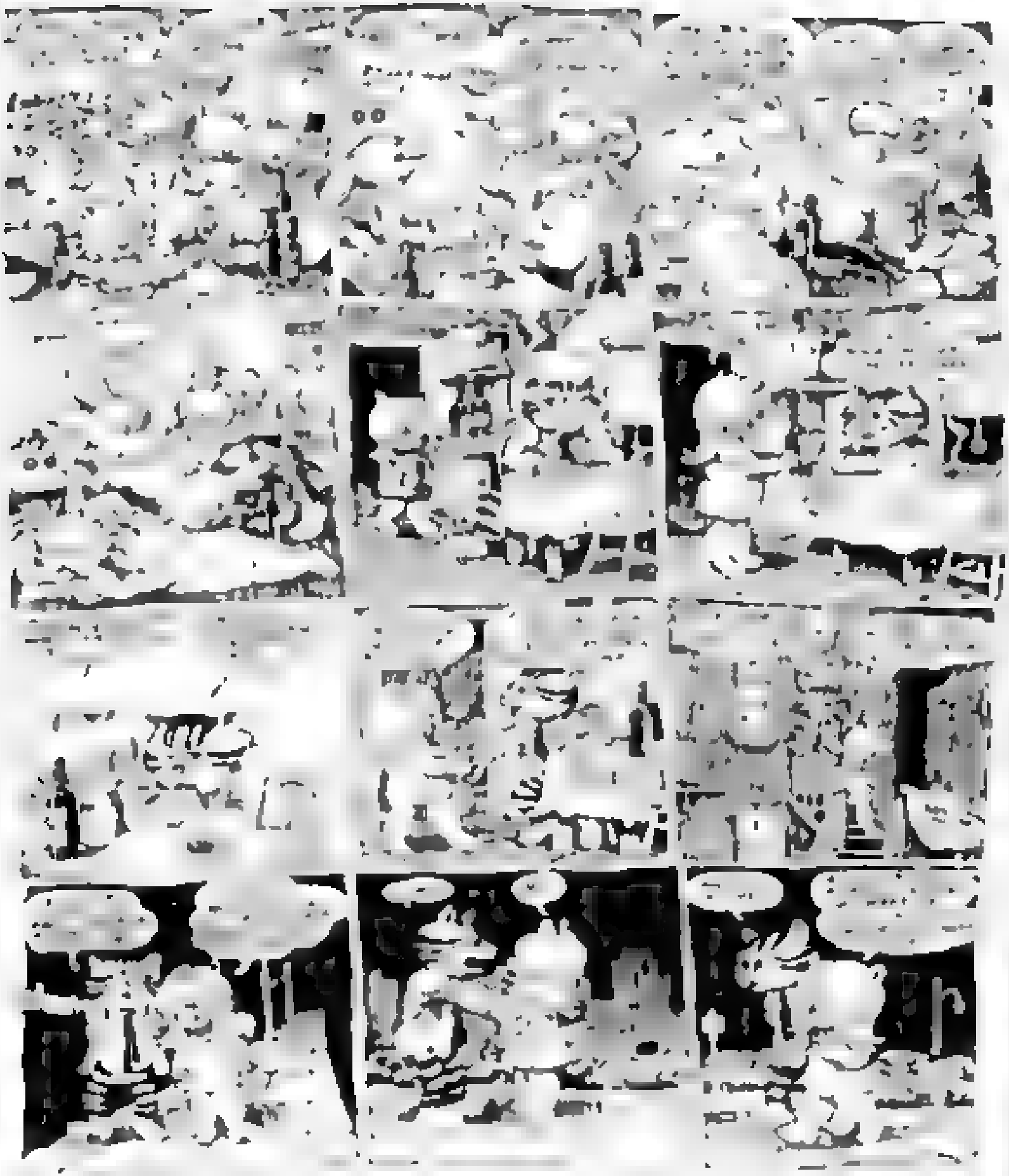
fred the teen-age girl pigeon

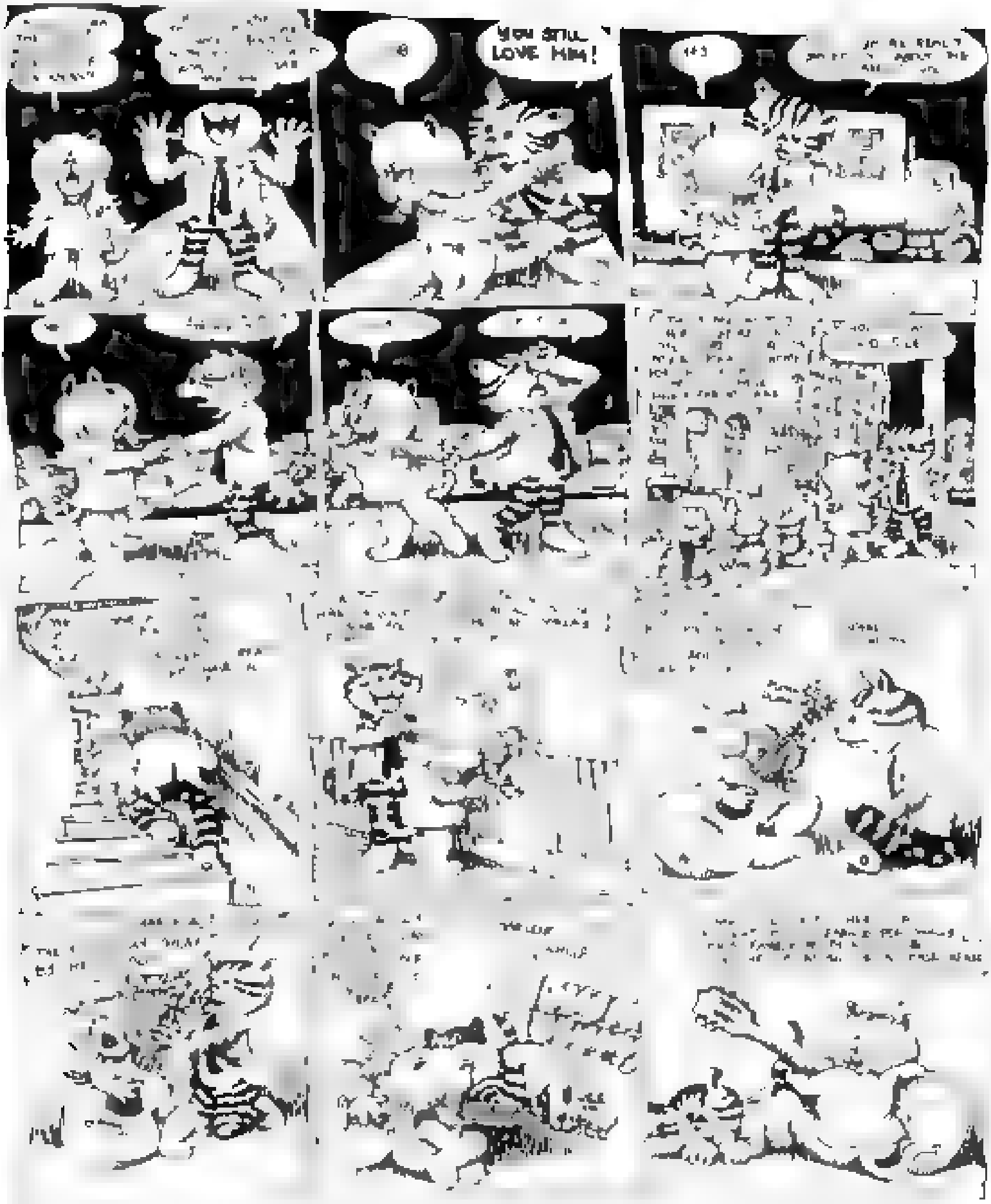


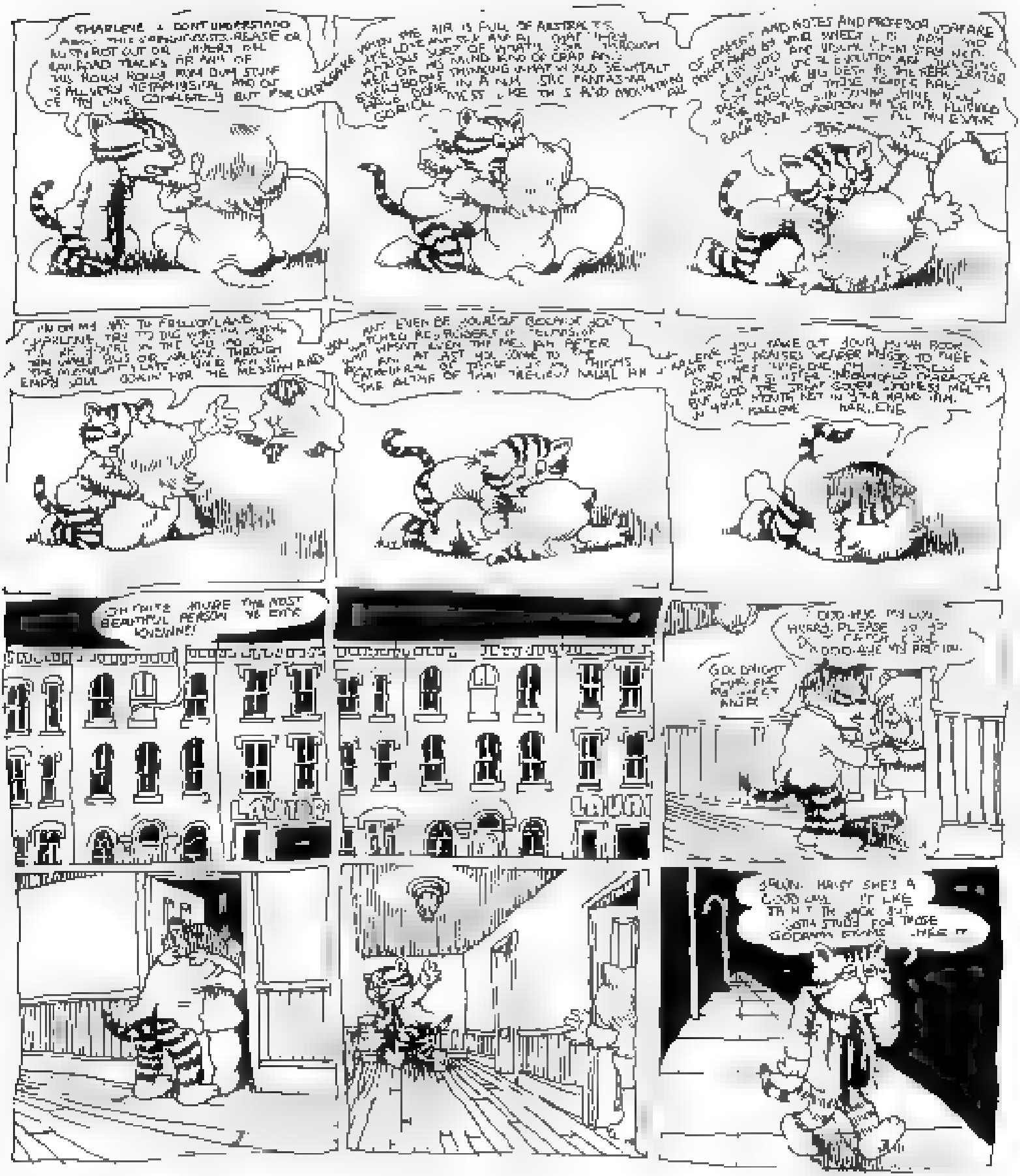

URP

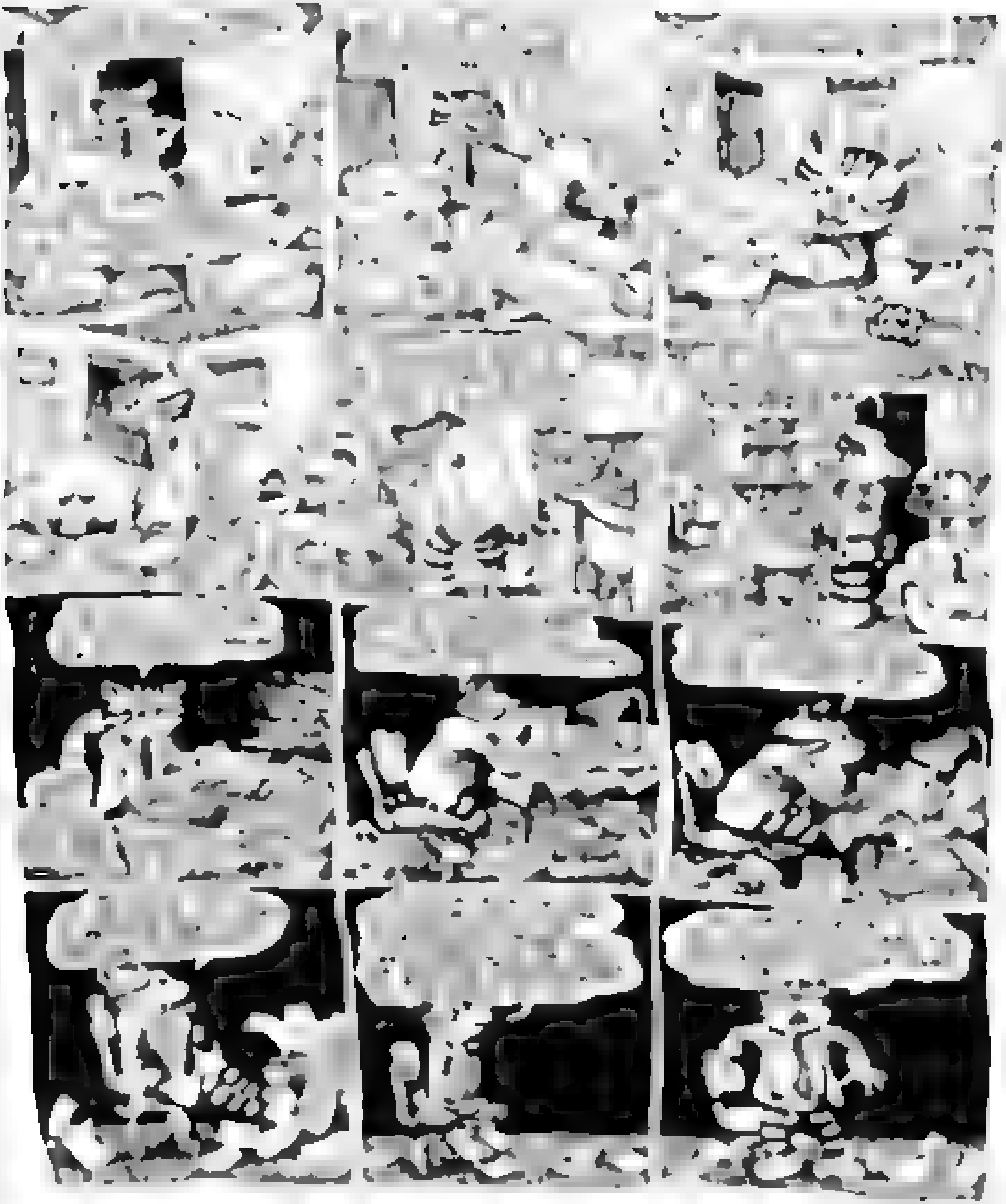
CRUMB
I'M KING OF!
STRUNG OUT!
OF THAT!
YOU SWINE!

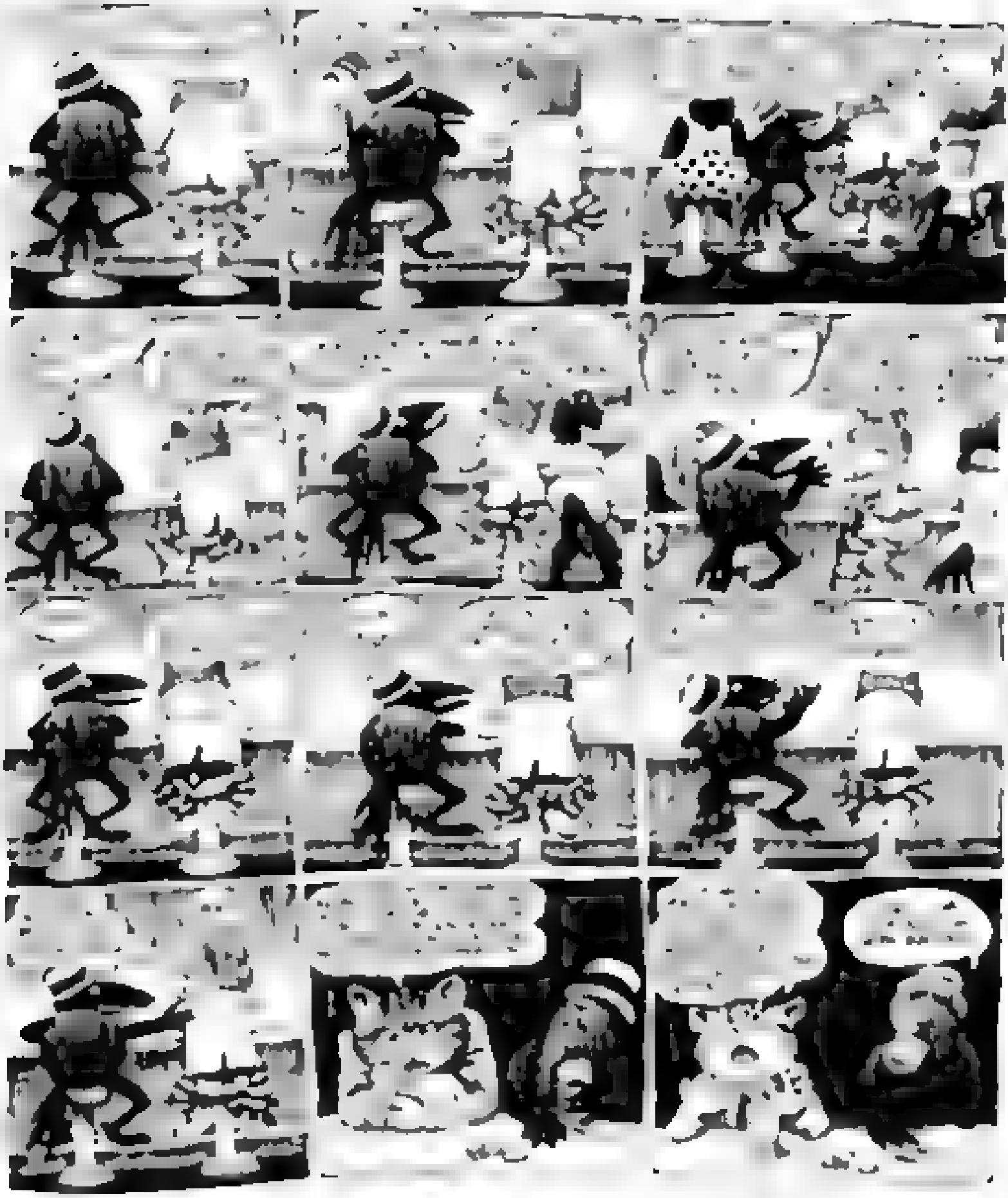


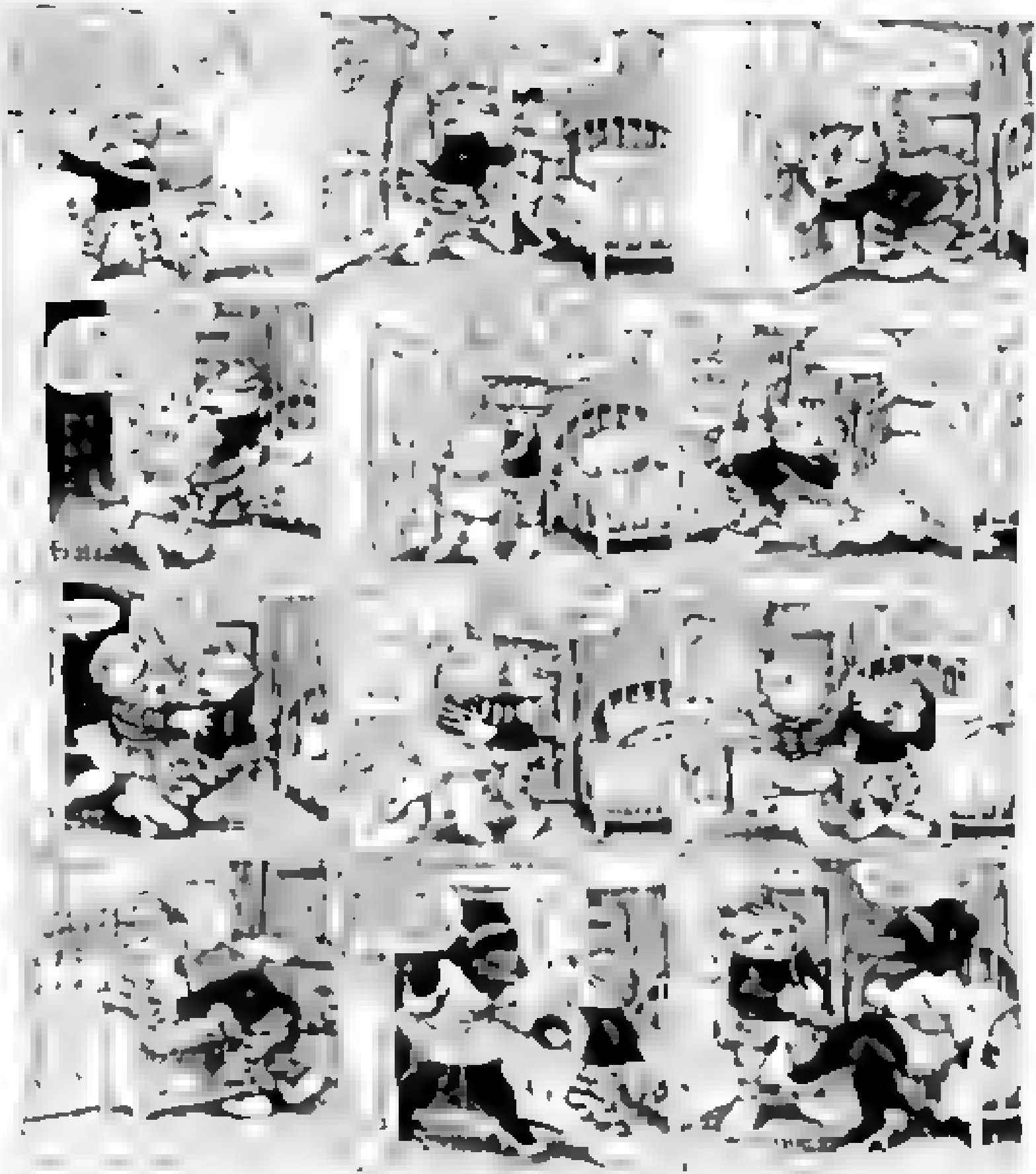



YOU STILL LOVE HIM!

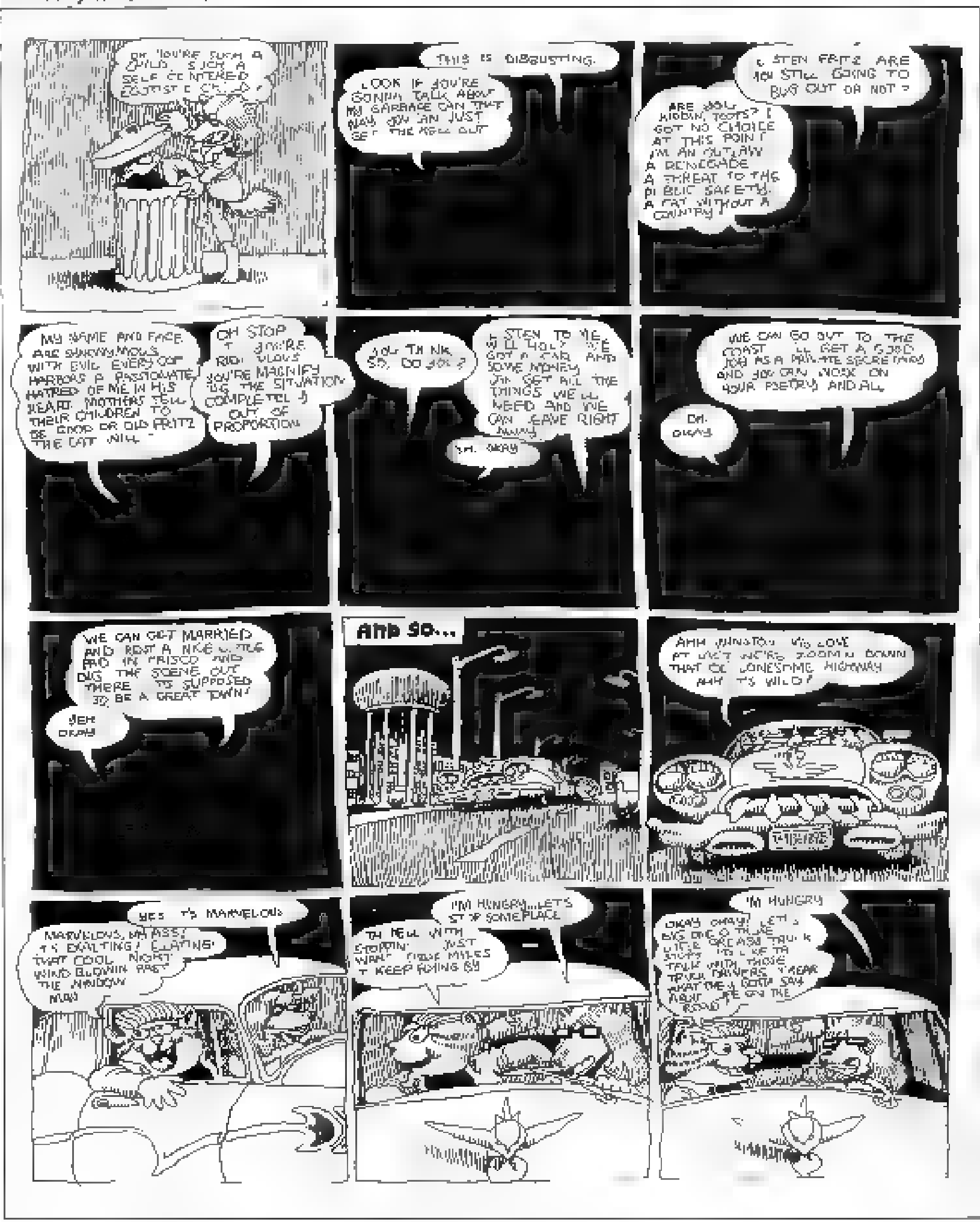

CHARLENE I DON'T UNDERSTAND
THE AIR IS FULL OF ABSTRACTS
AND NOTES AND PROFESSOR
ON MY WAY TO FOLLOW LAND
AND EVEN BE YOURSELF BECAUSE YOU
YOU TAKE OUT YOUR MUSH ROOM
OH THAT'S MORE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PERSON WE EVER KNEW!
LAUNDRY
LAUNDRY
GOD HAS MY LOVE HEARD PLEASE
GOD DAMNIT
SPLUNK HAISY SHE'S A GOOD GIRL IT LIKE TRY IT BACK BUT GOTTA STUDY FOR THOSE GODDAMN EXAMS

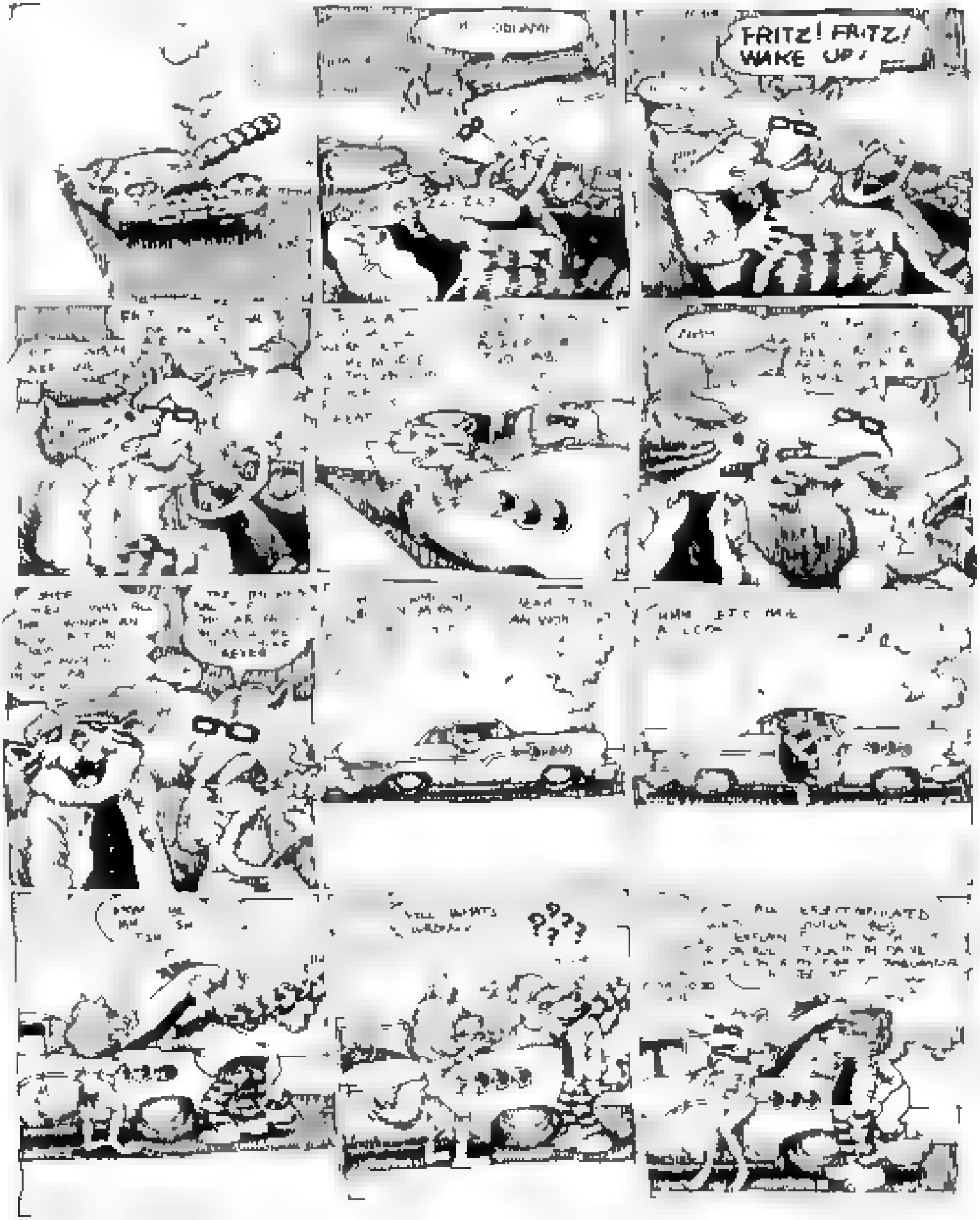


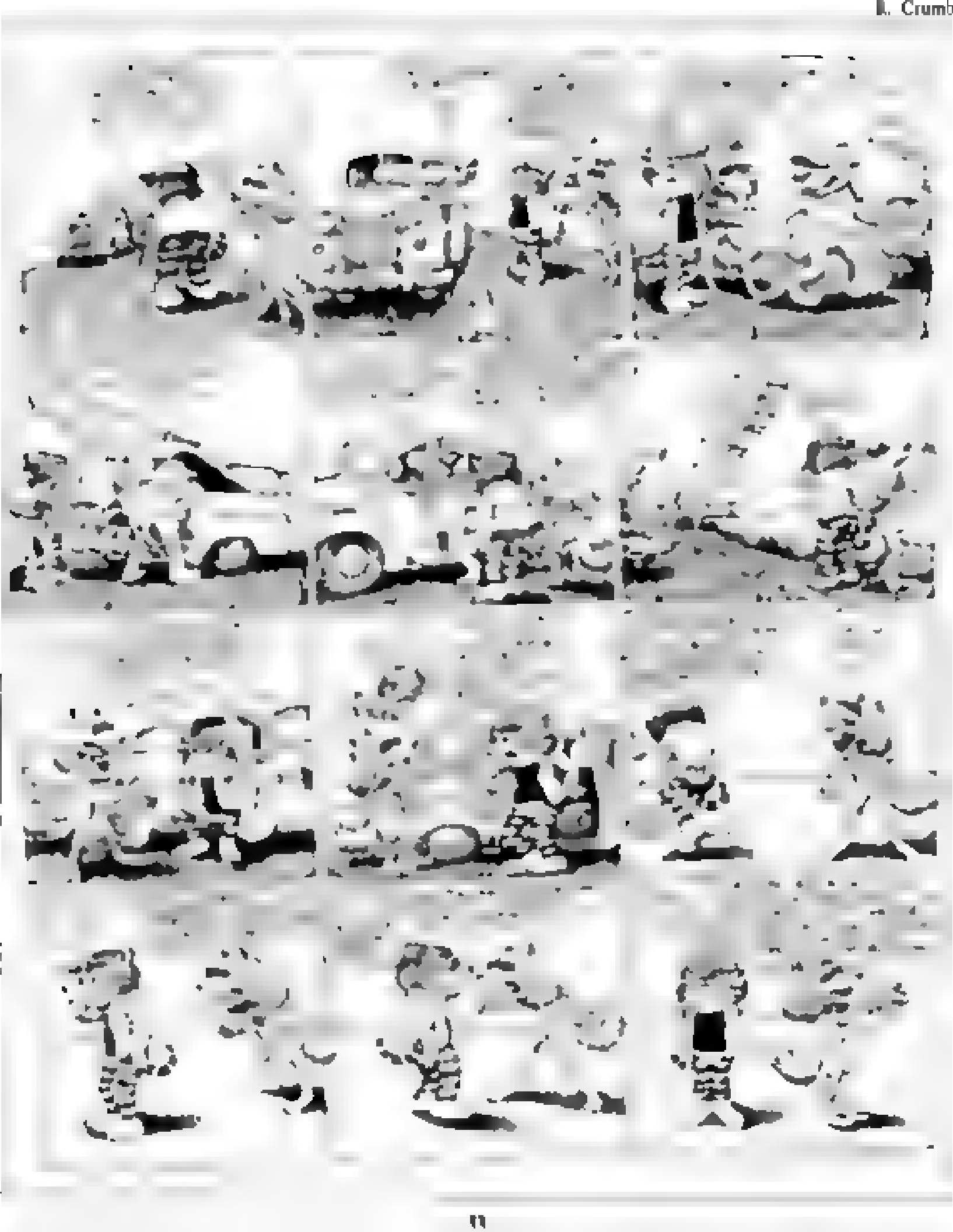


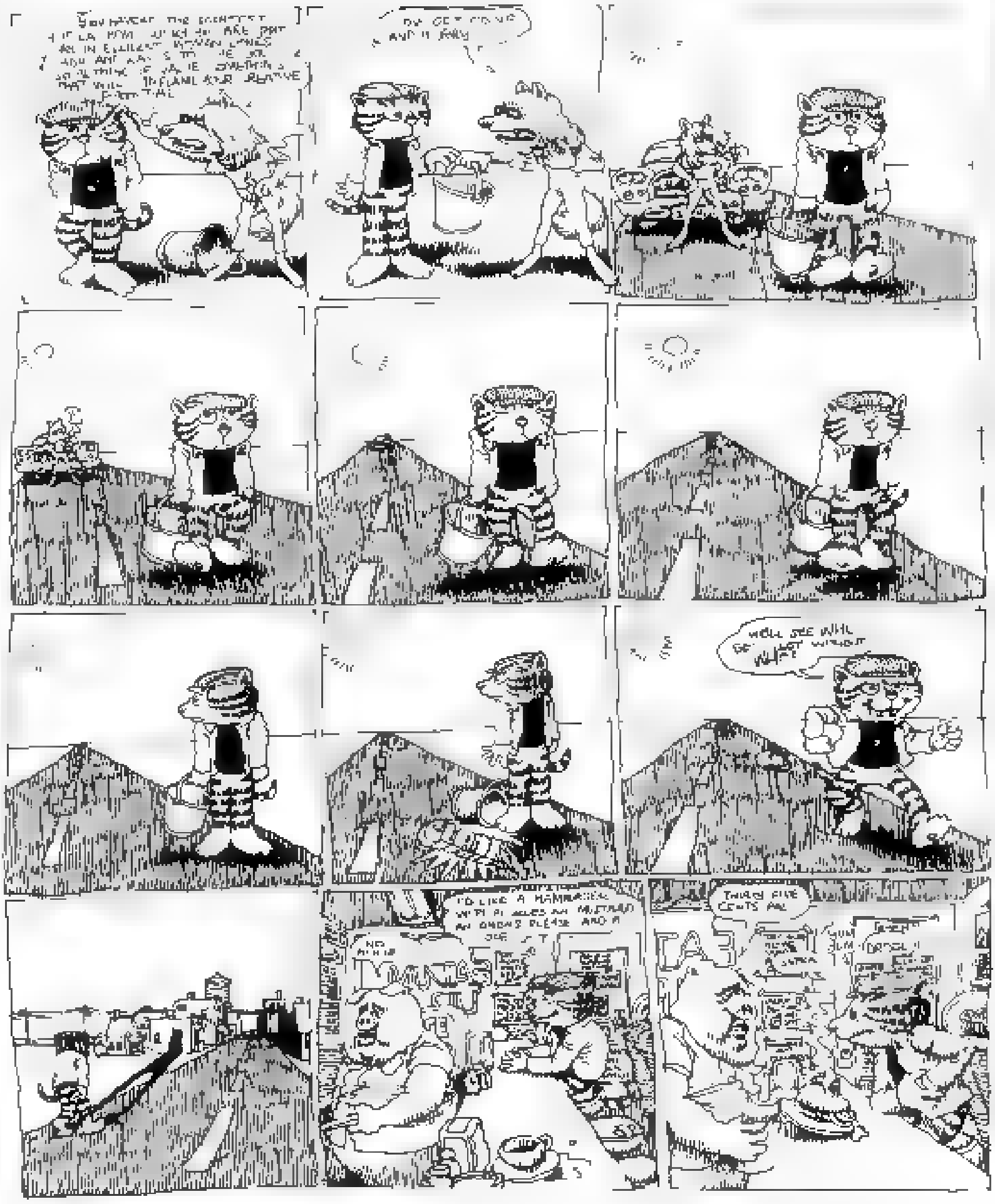


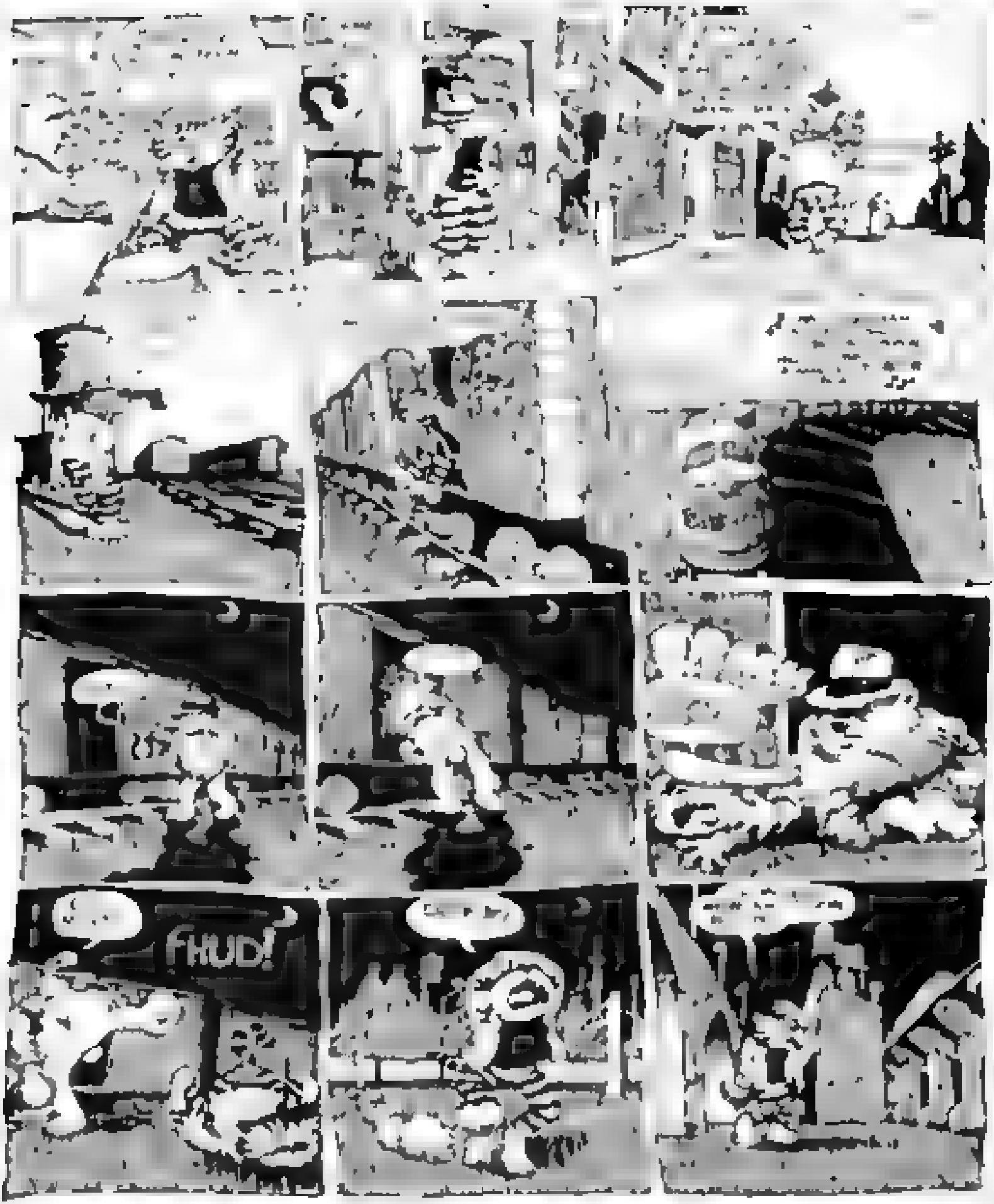
EEEK!

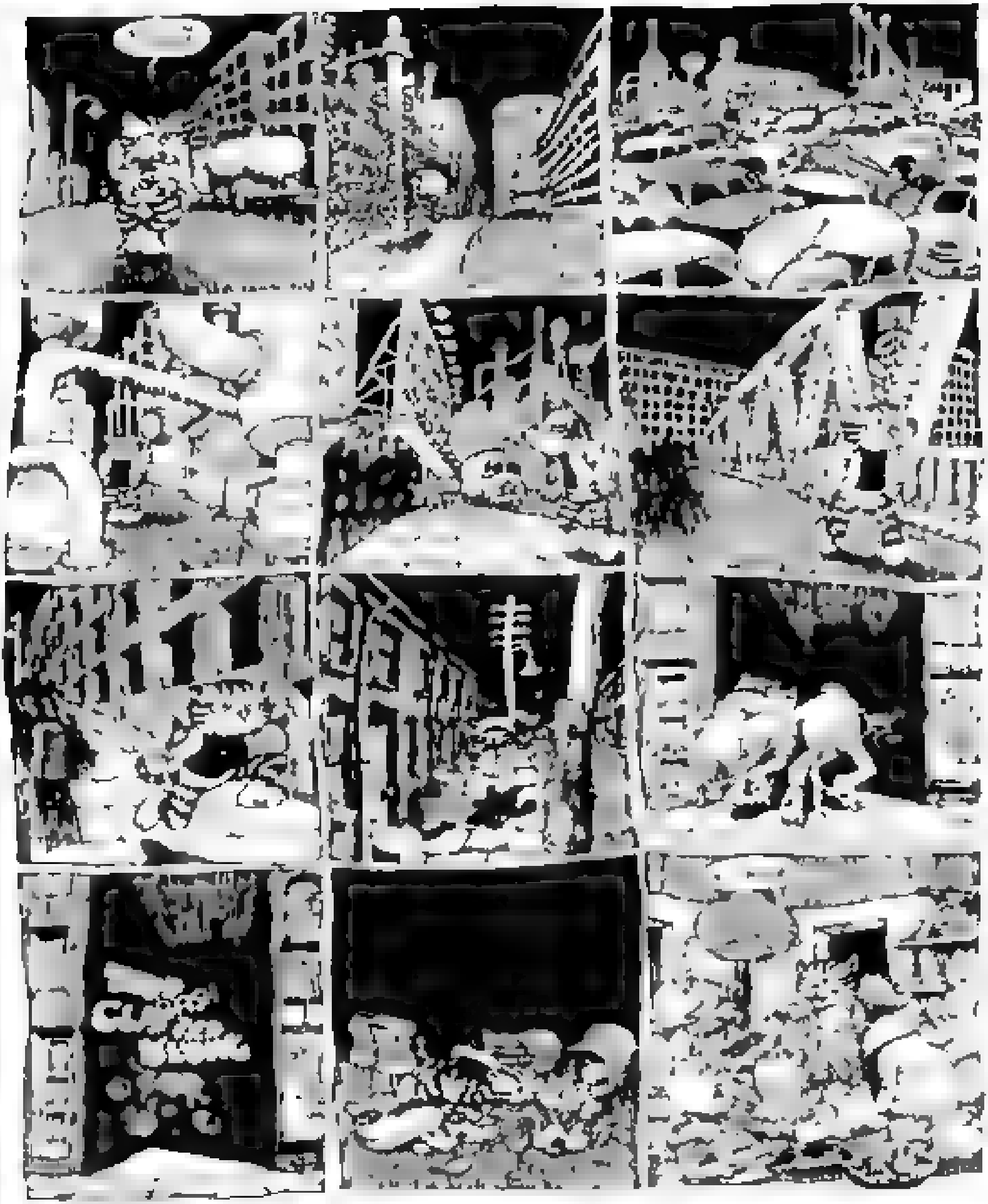

OH YOU'RE SUCH A CHILD. SUCH A SELF CENTERED EGOTIST! CH...
THIS IS DISGUSTING.
LOOK IF YOU'RE GONNA TALK ABOUT MY GARBAGE CAN THAT NAW JOY AN JUST GET THE HELL OUT
LISTEN FRITZ ARE YOU STILL GOING TO BUG OUT OR NOT?
ARE YOU KIDDIN, TOOTS? I GOT NO CHOICE AT THIS POINT I'M AN OUTLAW A RENEGADE A THREAT TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY. A RAT WITHOUT A COUNTRY
MY NAME AND FACE ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH EVIL EVERYONE HARBORS A PASSIONATE HATRED OF ME IN HIS HEART. MOTHERS TELL THEIR CHILDREN TO BE GOOD OR OLD FRITZ THE RAT WILL
OH STOP IT YOU'RE RIDICULOUS YOU'RE MAGNIFYING THE SITUATION COMPLETELY OUT OF PROPORTION
YOU THINK SO, DO YOU?
LISTEN TO ME WE'LL HOLD UP WE'VE GOT A CAR AND SOME MONEY OK GET ALL THE THINGS WE'LL NEED AND WE CAN LEAVE RIGHT AWAY
OH. OKAY
WE CAN GO OUT TO THE COAST I'LL GET A GOOD JOB AS A PRIVATE SECRETARY AND YOU CAN WORK ON YOUR POETRY AND ALL
OH. OKAY
WE CAN GET MARRIED AND RENT A NICE LITTLE PAD IN FRISCO AND DIG THE SCENE OUT THERE IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A GREAT TOWN!
YEH OKAY
And So...
AHH WINSTON YOU LOVE IT UNCLE WE'RE ZOOMIN DOWN THAT OL' LONESOME HIGHWAY AHH IT'S WILD!
YES IT'S MARVELOUS
MARVELOUS, MY ASS! IT'S EXALTING! ELATING! THAT COOL NIGHT WIND BLOWIN PAST THE WINDOW NOW
I'M HUNGRY...LET'S STOP SOMEPLACE
THE HELL WITH STOPPIN' JUST WANT RIDE MILES IT KEEP ROLLING BY
I'M HUNGRY
OKAY OKAY! LET'S EAT ONE OF THOSE GREASY TRUCK STOPS IT'S LIKE TALK WITH THOSE TRUCK DRIVERS YEAH WHAT THEY'LL GOTTA SAY ABOUT ME ON THE ROAD


FRITZ! FRITZ! WAKE UP!

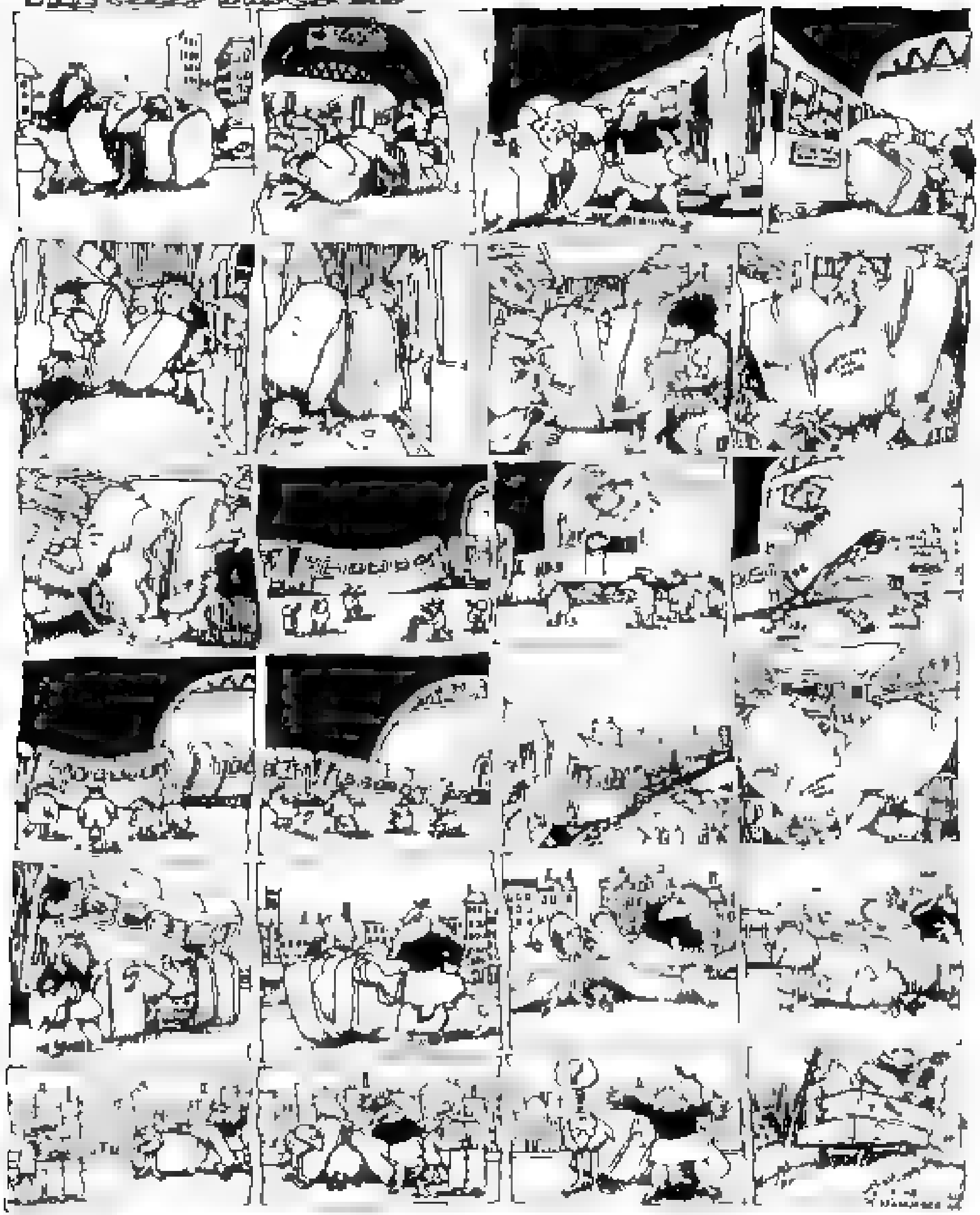



WELL SEE WHAT
THANK FIVE
CENTS PAL

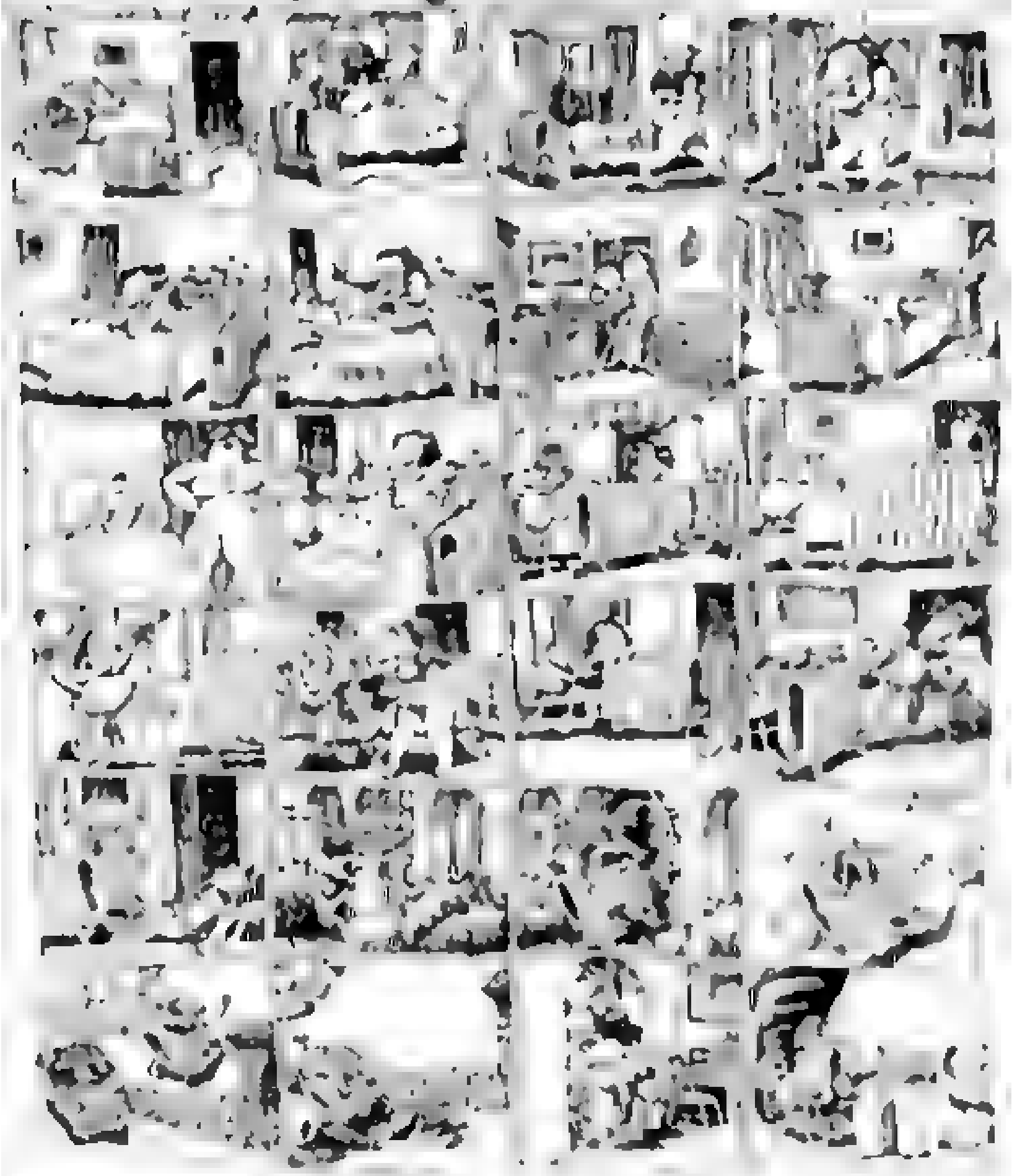

FHUD!

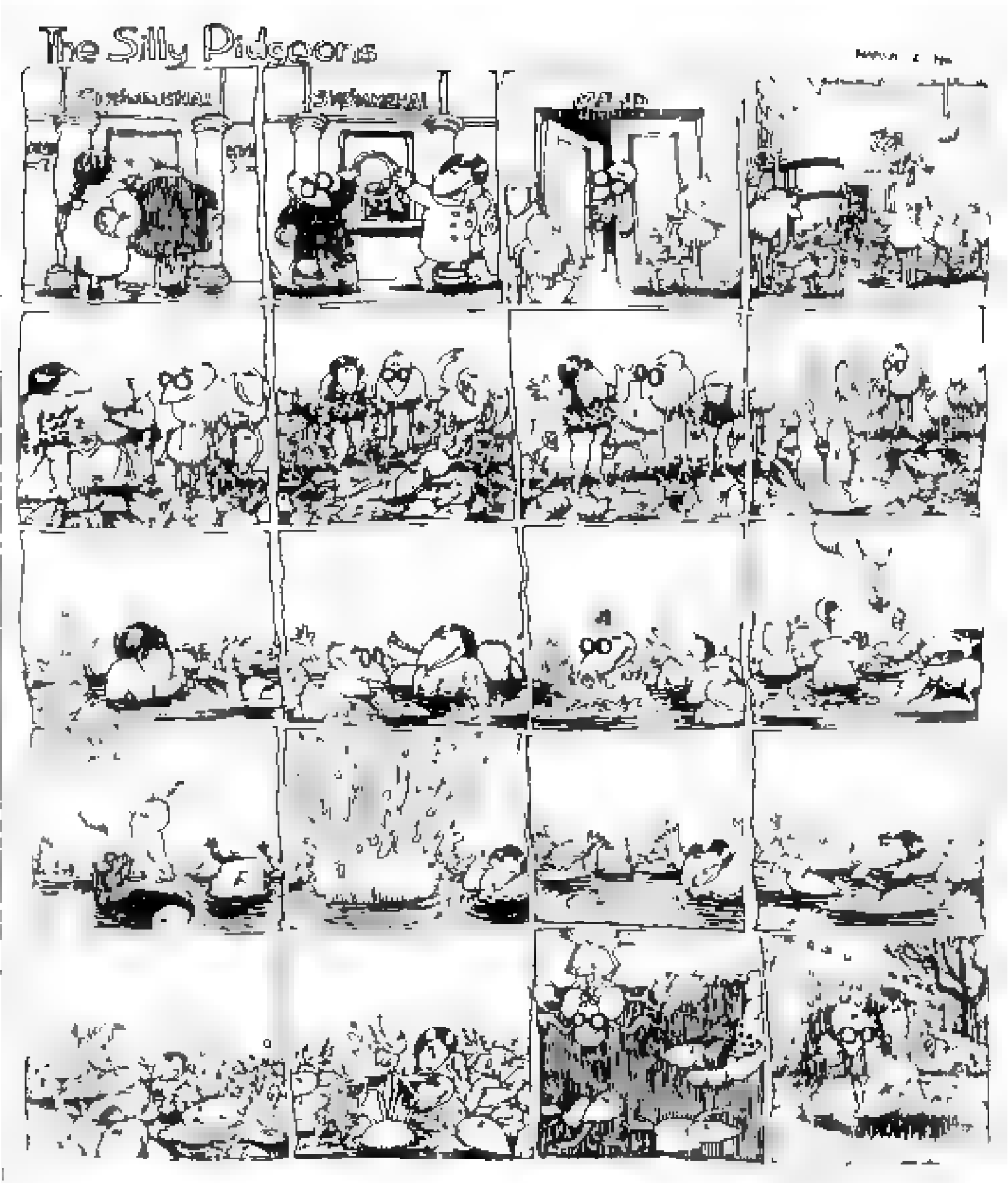


THE SILLY PIGEONS



The Silly Pidgeons




The Silly Pidgeons

BULGARIA

COMMUNIST PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN SOFIA, CAPITAL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

ARRIVED IN SOFIA IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. GETTING A TAXI WAS A REAL BITCH.

SINCE THE REVOLUTION, BULGARIA'S CAPITAL HAS MUSHROOMED INTO A MODERN METROPOLIS

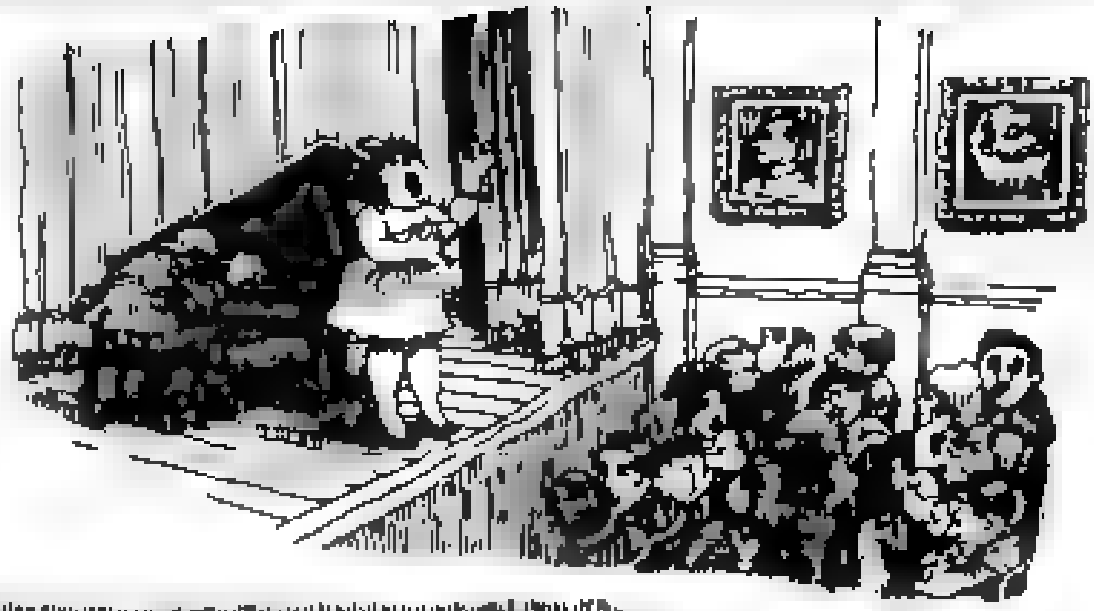
BULGARIA IS A POOR COUNTRY, BUT ONE CAN FIND A WEALTH OF BEAUTIFUL RELICS AND ANCIENT OBJECTS...

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IS FREE FROM DECADENT WESTERN "MORALS."

FACTORY WORKERS ARE MORE PRODUCTIVE IN COLORFUL, INSPIRING SURROUNDINGS.

A WIDE VARIETY OF HOME APPLIANCES HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE BULGARIAN HOUSEWIFE.
ЛИАЗ СТОТИНКИ ЦОФ 3
SMALL VESTIGES OF FREE ENTERPRISE STILL EXIST.
THE PEOPLE NOW HAVE BUYING-POWER, BUT IT'S ALL ON A "CASH-AND-CARRY" BASIS.
RUSSIA SENDS FARM MACHINERY TO BULGARIA IN EXCHANGE FOR MUCH-NEEDED WHEAT AND OTHER CROPS.

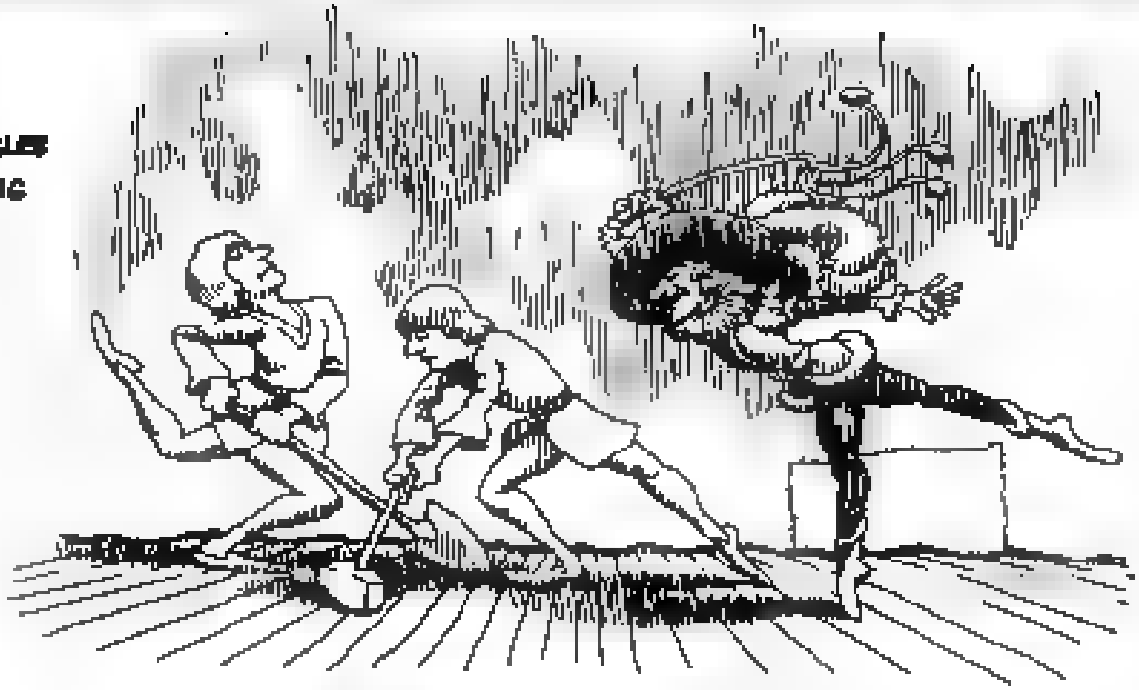
CULTURE IN BULGARIA



MUCH OF THE CULTURE OF THE NEW PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IS IMPORTED FROM THE U.S.S.R.

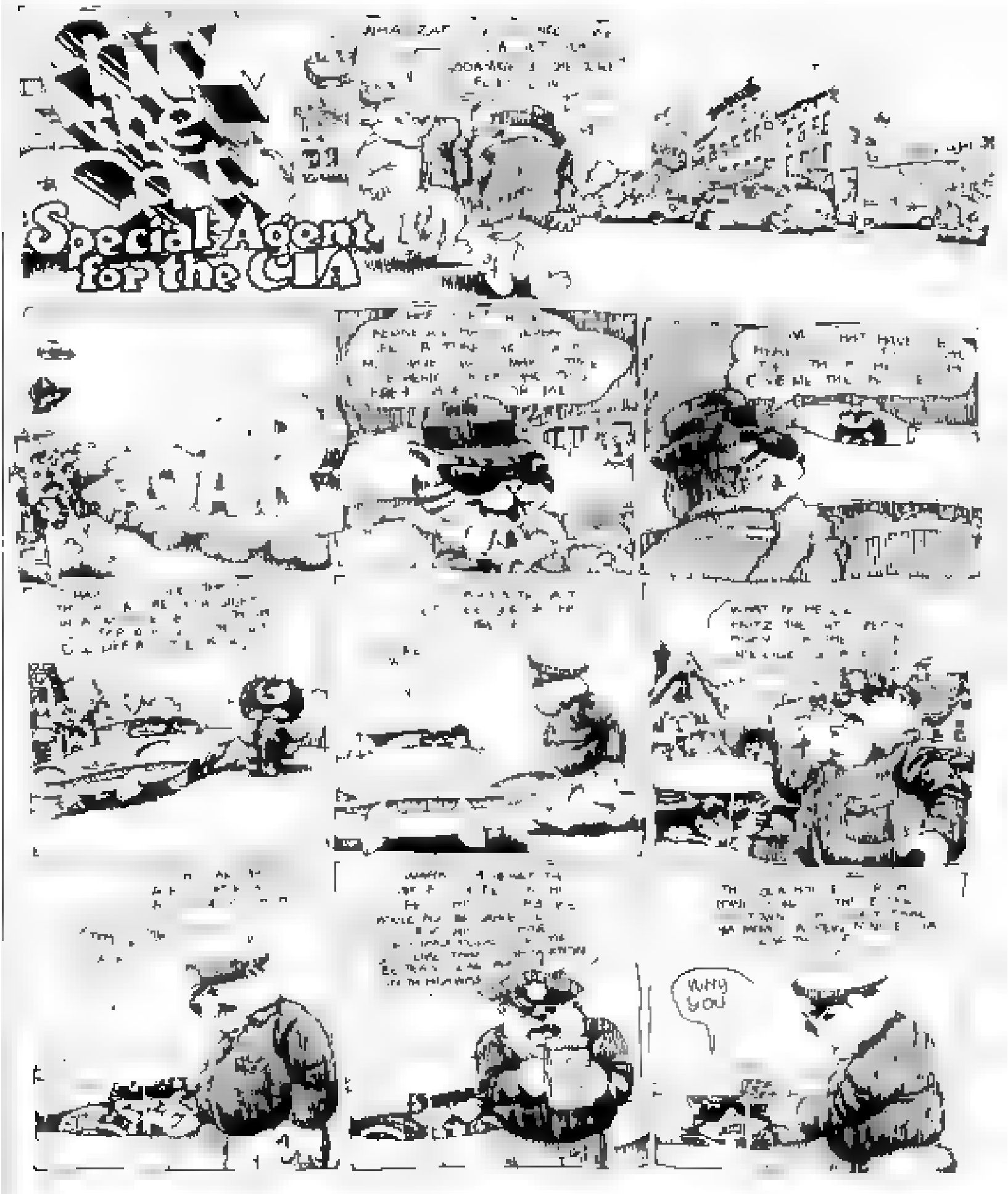
STATE PUBLISHING HOUSES PROVIDE HUNDREDS OF NEW BOOKS EVERY YEAR FOR THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE MASSES

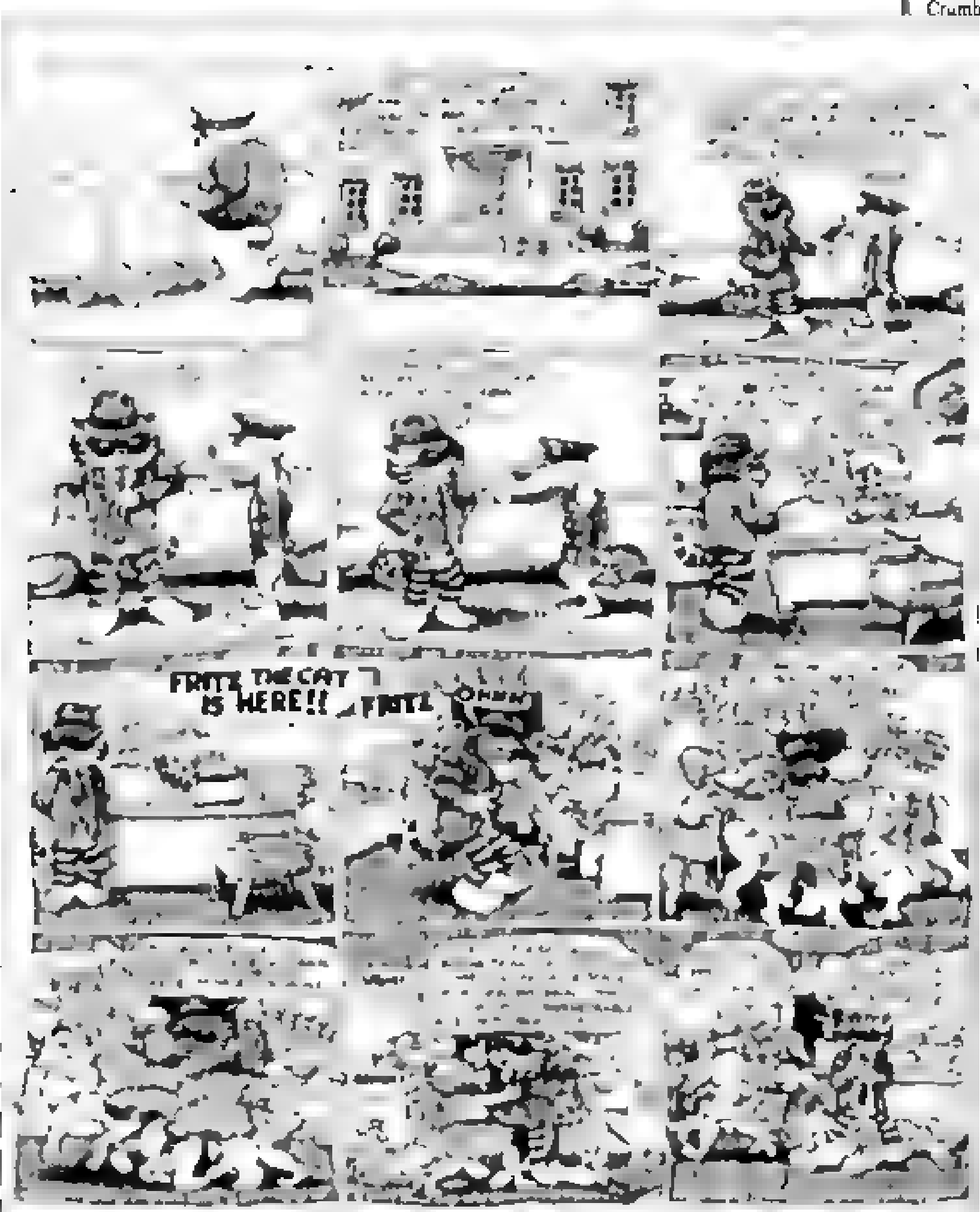
THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART IS FILLED WITH INSPIRING WORKS THAT ARE EASILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE AVERAGE MAN. DEGENERATE "ABSTRACT" ART IS NOT TOLERATED.

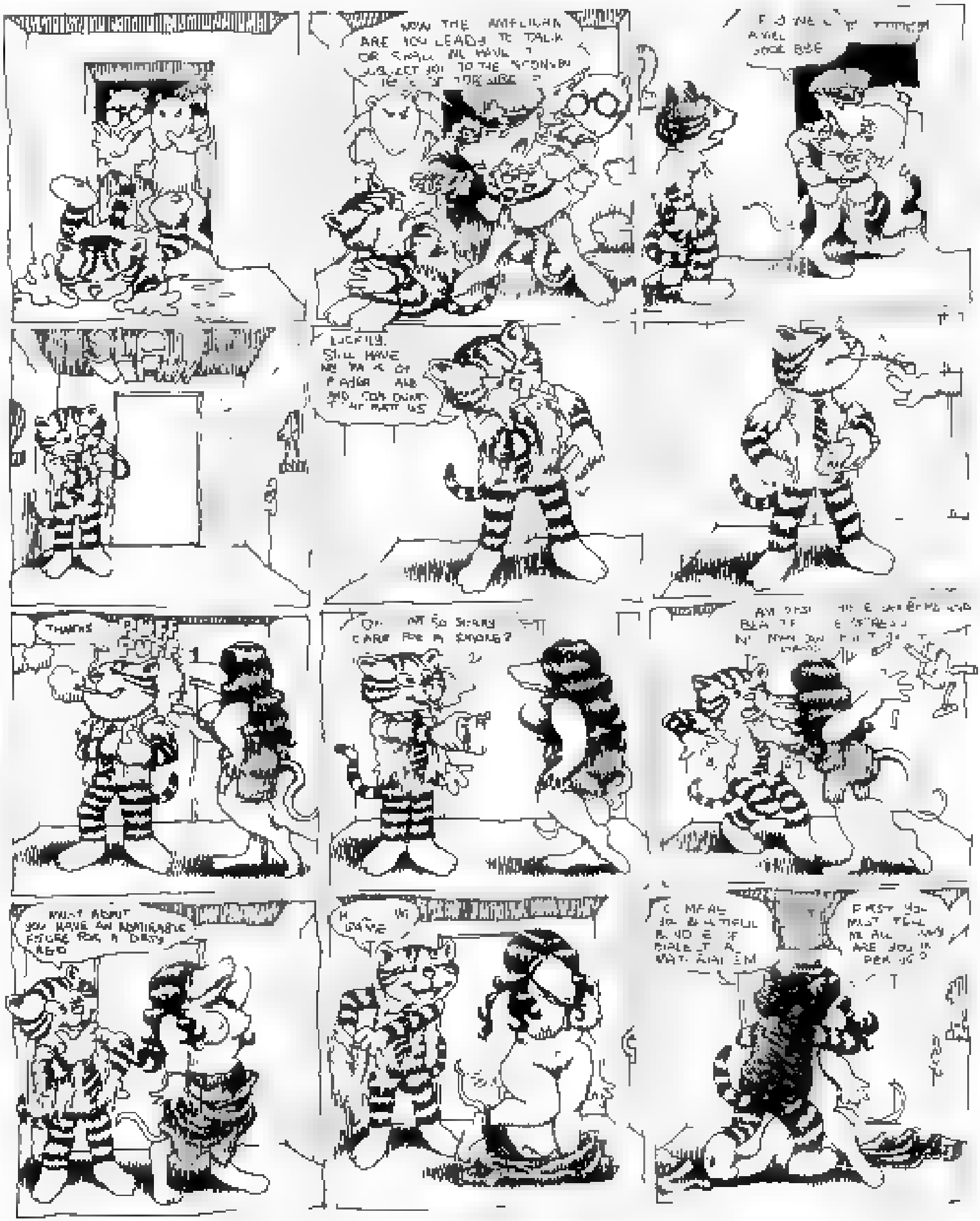

NEW BALLET DEPICTS STRUGGLES OF THE WORKING CLASS.

THEY WOULD LIKE TO DO THE TWIST BUT IT'S AGAINST THE LAW.

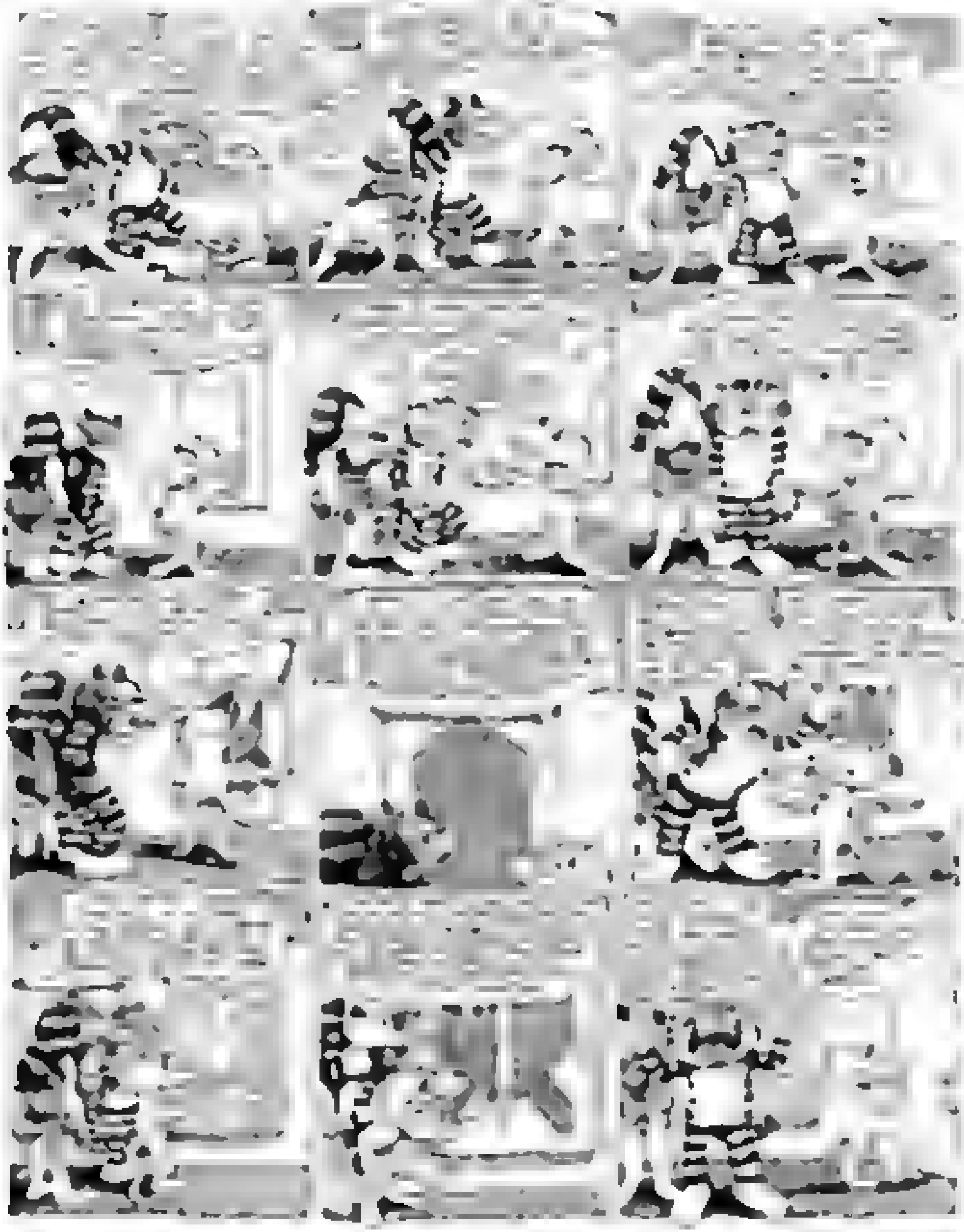
ANYWAY, SOME WESTERN INFLUENCES DO SEEP IN....
R CRUMB

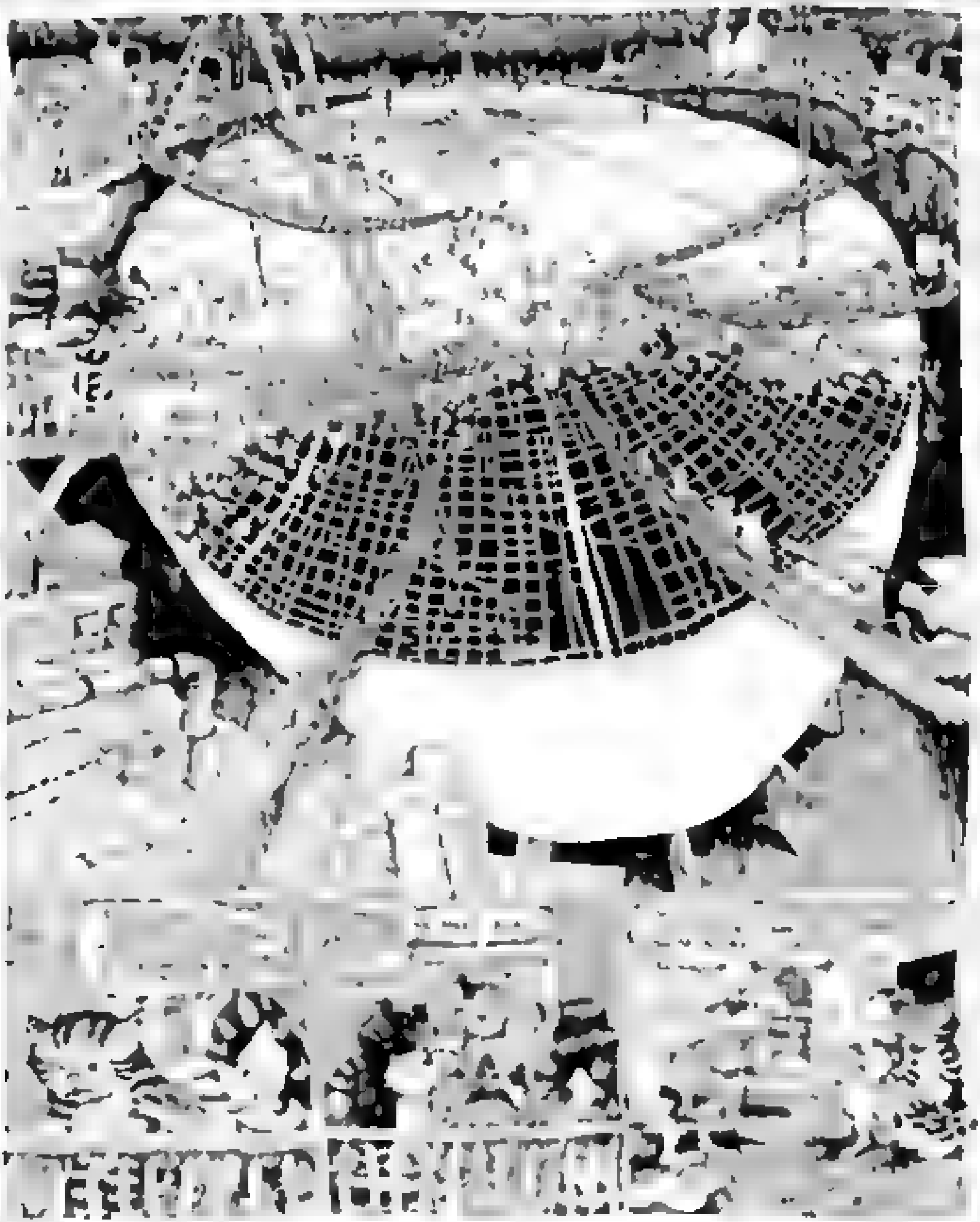

Special Agent for the CIA
WHY YOU

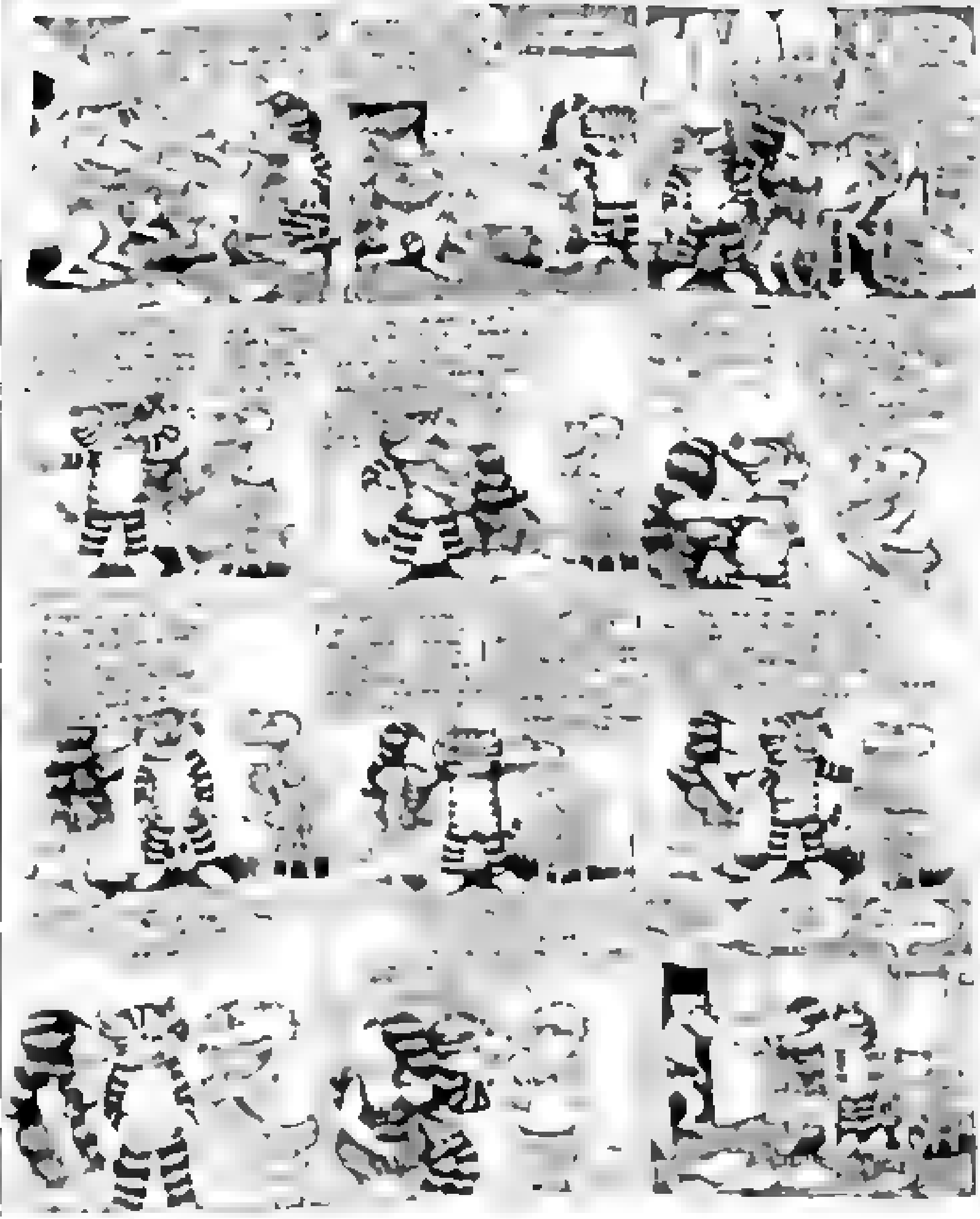

FRITZ THE CAT IS HERE!!
FRITZ
OHHH

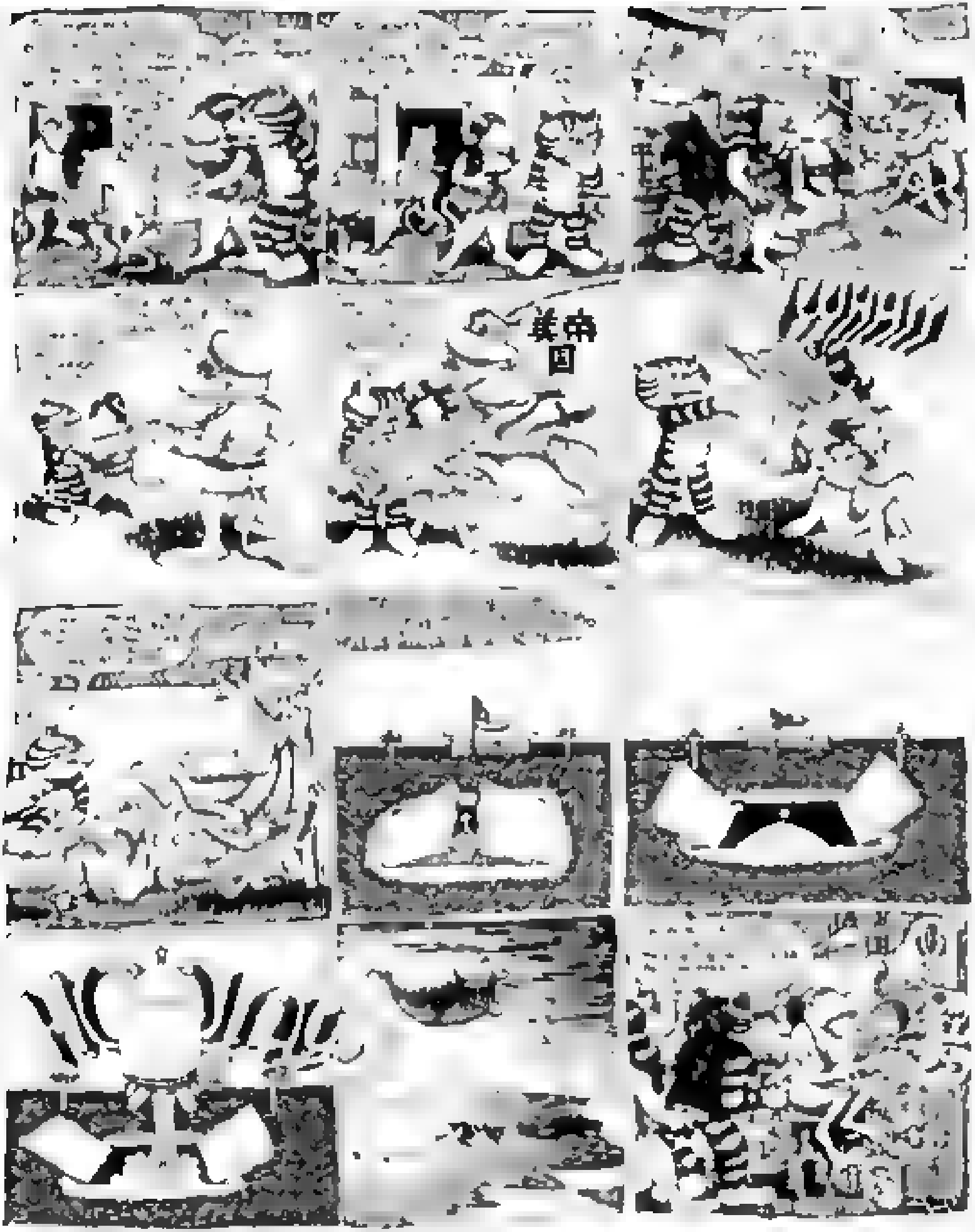

NOW THE AMERICAN ARE YOU LEADER TO TALK OR SHALL WE HAVE TO SUBJECT YOU TO THE WOMAN
LUCKILY, STILL HAVE NO TRACE OF FADER AND SO, YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH US
THANKS
OH, NOT SO SCARY CARE FOR A SMOKE?
WHAT ABOUT YOU HAVE AN ADMIRABLE FIGURE FOR A DATE AGO
I DRIVE
FIRST YOU MUST TELL ME ALL ARE YOU IN PERSON?

NOW YOU MUST BE TORTURED IN ALL THE ATEST TECHNIQUE BEFORE FINALLY I WILL DO IT WITH MY OWN HANDS
THE HILL TO THE BACK
SHOT
SPLASH
A BOTTOMLESS PITT!
MAYBE IT'S DEEP ENOUGH TO END IT IN A BUS STATION OR A FALL OUT SHELTER IN SCARSDALE
YIKY! A HORRIBLE HIDEOUS MONSTROUS BEAST
GLUD
BEIGE

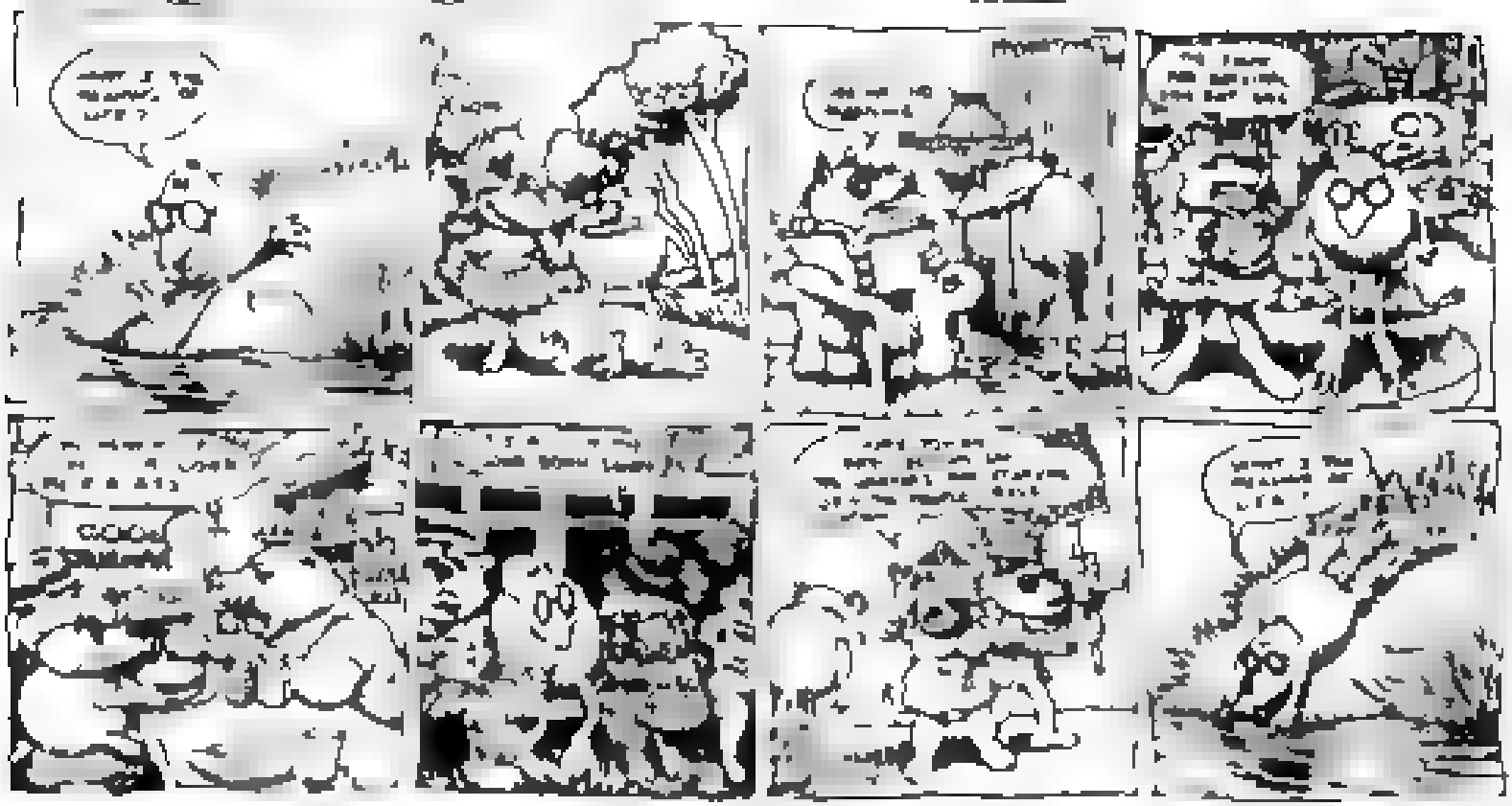


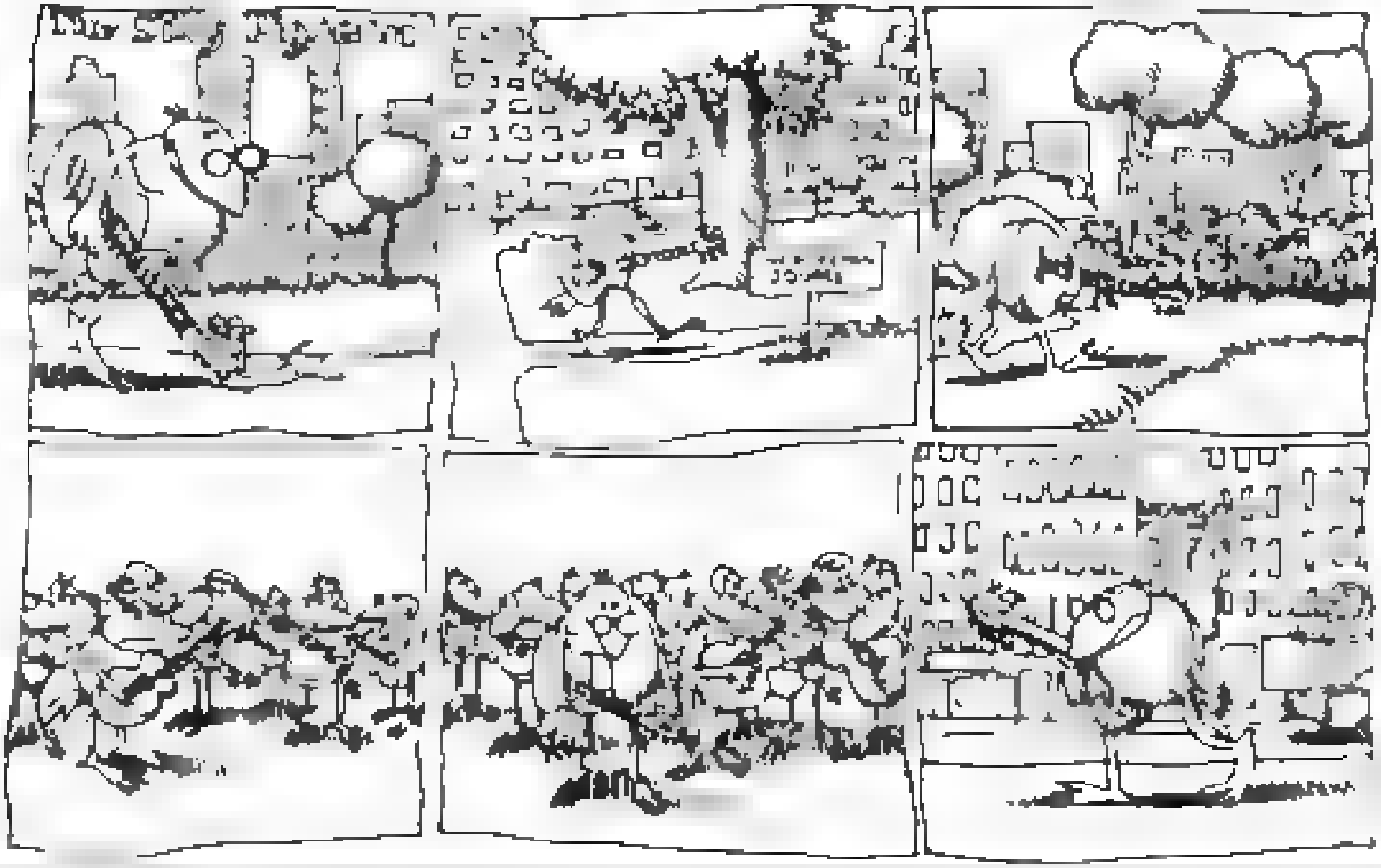


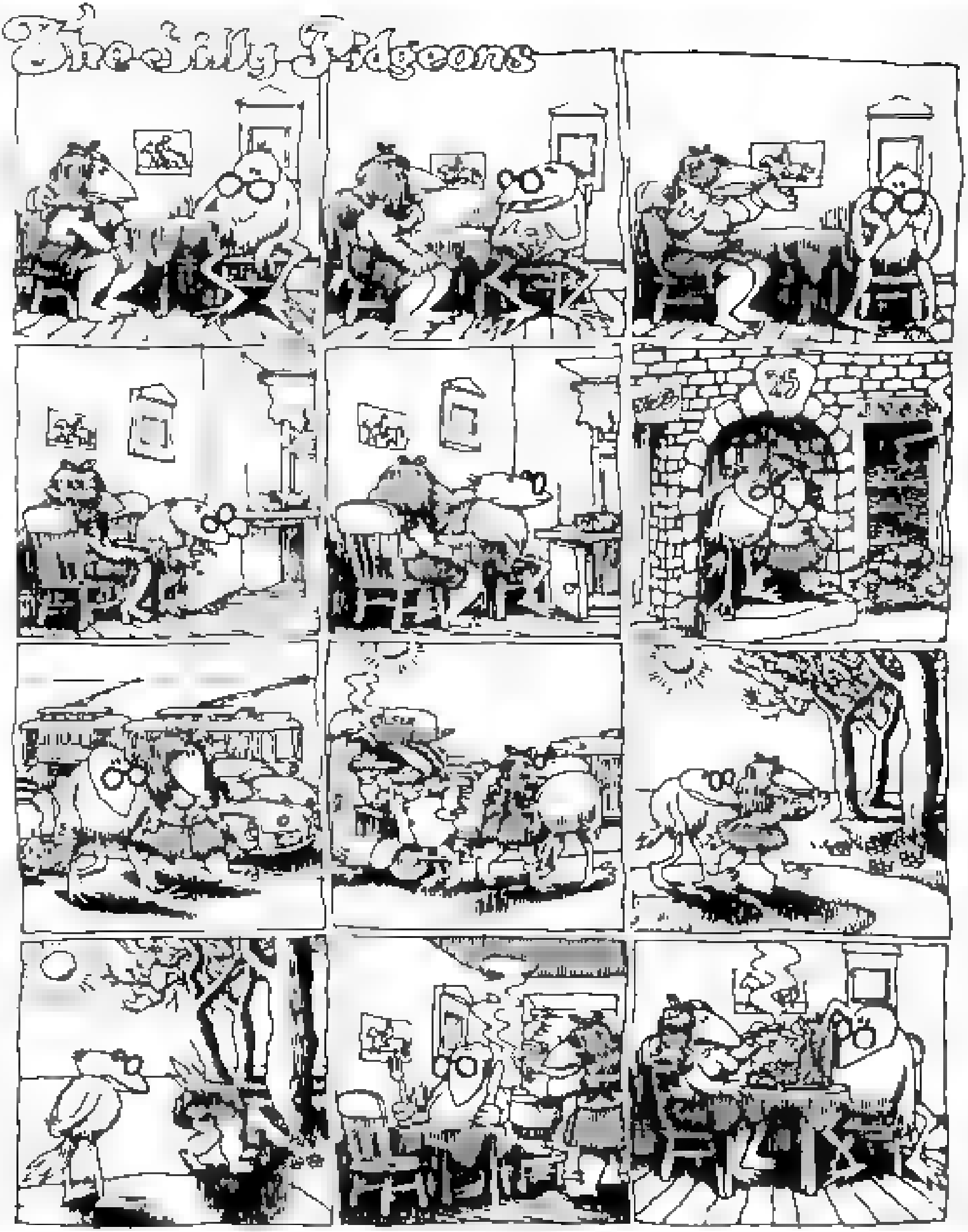



美南国

The Silly Pidgeons by R. Crumb

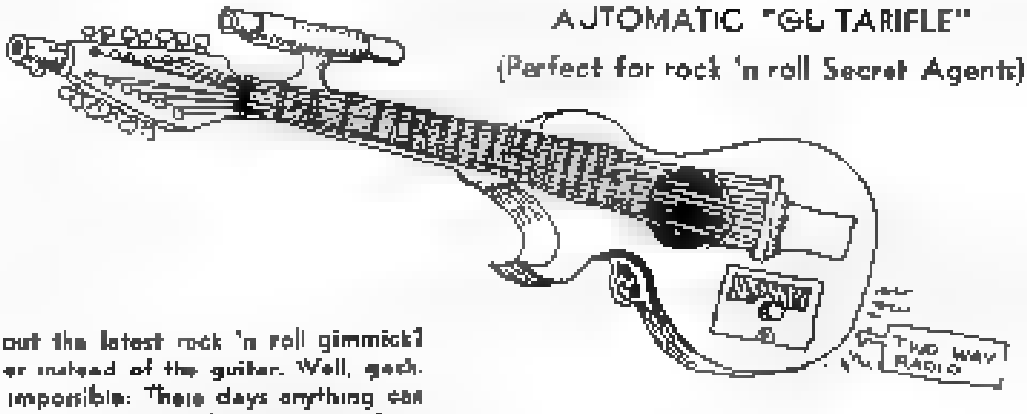





The Silly Pidgeons
25

by R Crumb
GREAT THEN IS JUST A SIMPLE MATTER OF FILLING A FEW FORMS AND TAKING A COUPLE OF TESTS
START ON THE FIRST FLOOR AND CONTINUE ROUND TO THE TEST ROOM

GIMME THAT HAT!
HEY
COME BACK WITH THAT THEM THINGS ARE EXPENSIVE
I'M AFRAID THE CIGAR HABIT HAS WORKED ME OUT AS A RUNNER FOLLOW THAT GIRL
HA HA I GOT A TOPHAT
FASTER KID FASTER
WOOPS! IT'S TOO BIG
LOOK OUT
SPLAT!
MY HAT IS RUINED!
YOU MADE ME SKIN MY KNEE
GOTCHA
GEE WIZ THIS KID'S WILD!
HEY THER CUTE!
MMMMM
O GOSH
SAROOP DUTH



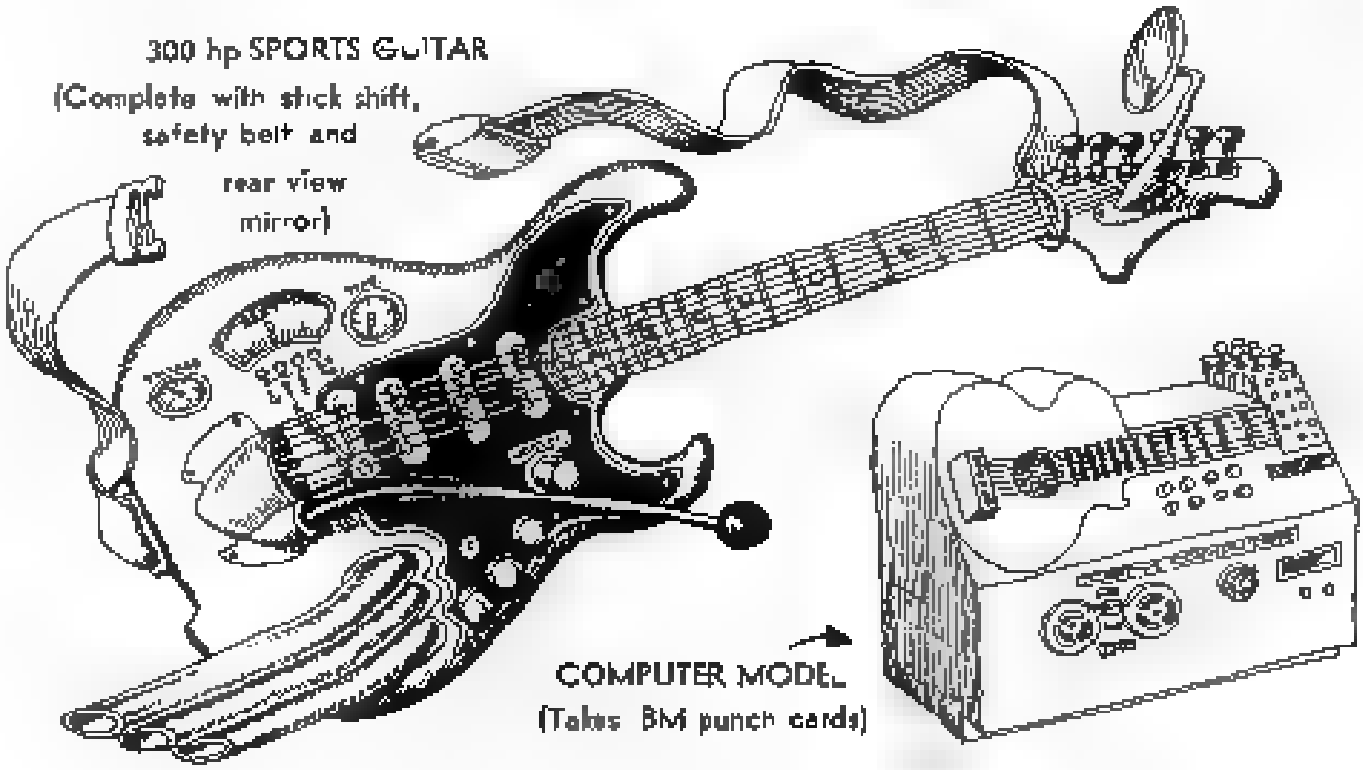
AUTOMATIC "GUITARIFLE"
(Perfect for rock 'n roll Secret Agents)

Have you heard about the latest rock 'n roll gimmick? You plug in the singer instead of the guitar. Well, gosh, a-roomy, it's not so impossible. These days anything can happen. And probably WILL. Take, for example, these fabulous sketches by boss artist Robert Crumb, in which he makes some dandy predictions regarding

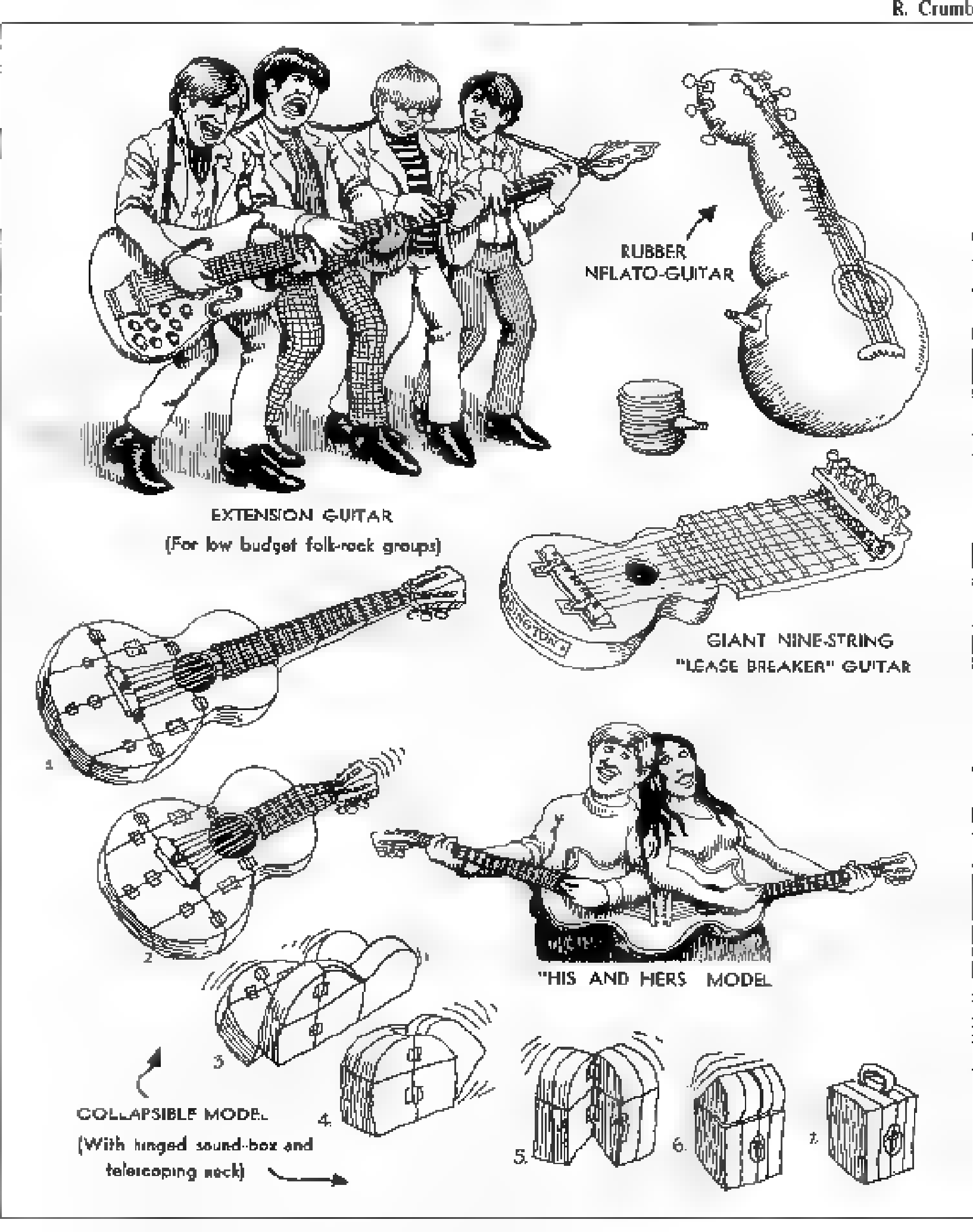
guitar models of the future

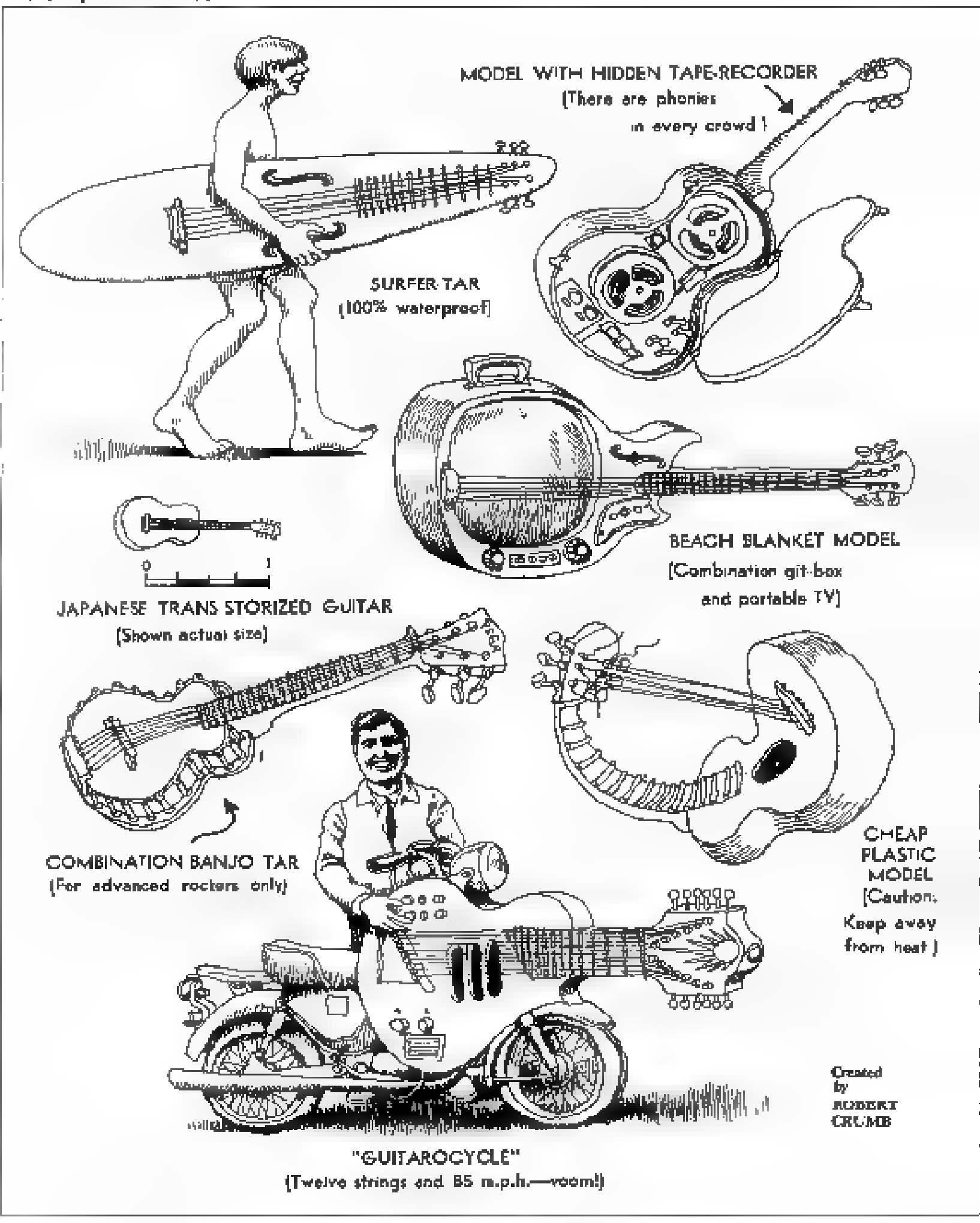
BAT-GUITAR
(For super heroes only)

300 hp SPORTS GUITAR
(Complete with stick shift, safety belt and rear view mirror)



COMPUTER MODEL
(Takes IBM punch cards)


RUBBER
INFLATO-GUITAR
EXTENSION GUITAR
(For low budget folk-rock groups)
GIANT NINE-STRING
"LEASE BREAKER" GUITAR
1
2
"HIS AND HERS" MODEL
3
4
5
6
7
COLLAPSIBLE MODEL
(With hinged sound-box and
telescoping neck)

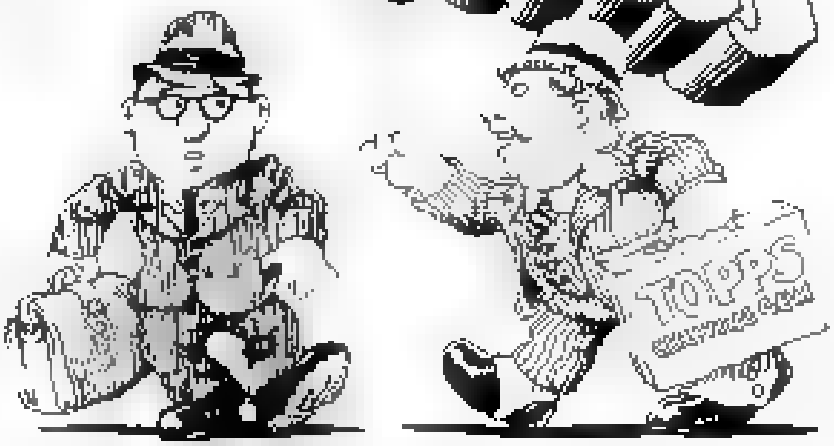

MODEL WITH HIDDEN TAPE-RECORDER
(There are phonies in every crowd!)
SURFER TAR
(100% waterproof)
BEACH BLANKET MODEL
(Combination git-box and portable TV)
JAPANESE TRANS STORIZED GUITAR
(Shown actual size)
COMBINATION BANJO TAR
(For advanced rockers only)
CHEAP PLASTIC MODEL
(Caution: Keep away from heat!)
Created by ROBERT CRUMB
"GUITAROCYCLE"
(Twelve strings and 85 m.p.h.—voom!)

The Story of the Bazooka Gift Certificate Deal

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

OR:

HOW TO IMPRESS YOUR BOSS and get LUXURIOUS GIFTS at the same time! FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS AND YOURSELF AS WELL! ALL FOR FREE!!



Here are some of the wonderful NEW GIFTS your retailers get FREE in Bazooka's new & expanded GIFT CERTIFICATE DEAL PROMOTION

1

These are also the Gifts YOU, too, can get FREE!

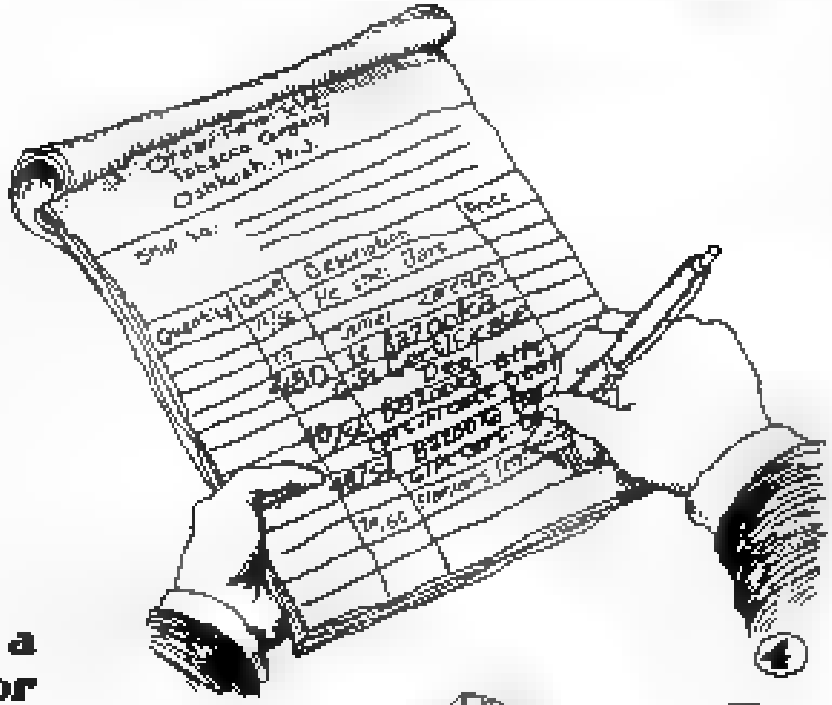
2

Your retailers get their Gift Certificates by BUYING boxes of Bazooka's Gift Certificate Deals FROM YOU!

(There's one Certificate packed inside every 480-count box of 1¢ BAZOOKA. There's a ½ certificate packed inside every 48-count box of 5¢ BAZOOKA clips and 5¢ BAZOOKA bars.)

3

YOU get your certificates by SELLING boxes of Bazooka's Gift Certificate Deals to your retailers.



4

To be precise, you get a full value Certificate for every case* of Bazooka's Certificate Deals you sell...

...AS A SPECIAL BONUS UNTIL MARCH 1, 1966!!

Read the Small Print

* one case is made up of only six 480 count 1¢ deals or twelve 48-count 5¢ clip or 5¢ bar deals.

5

GREAT

... you might say...

BUT HOW MANY CERTIFICATES DOES IT TAKE TO GET THE GIFTS?

6

It can take as little or as many as you want!

If a retailer buys only 10 (ten!) boxes of 480 count Bazooka from you, he'll have enough certificates to get this set of Eight

MONOGRAMMED LUSTREWARE GLASSES

7

When you sell only 60 (sixty!) boxes of 480 count Bazooka, YOU'LL be able to get that set of Monogrammed Glassware

TOO!

8

How about this 9-cup CORNING WARE PERCOLATOR?

Your retailers can get it FREE for the Certificates packed in only TWELVE 480 count deals!

9

Sell only SIX retailers enough deals to get that Corning Ware Percolator and you'll have enough Certificates to get it, too!

10

You and your retailers can get Christian Dior Perfume for as little as 6 Certificates or a Kodak Instamatic Camera (with flashcube) for only 19 certificates.

Or, if you prefer, you can save towards an RCA Stereo Phonograph, free for 98 certificates, or a Westinghouse Air Conditioner, free for 180 certificates!

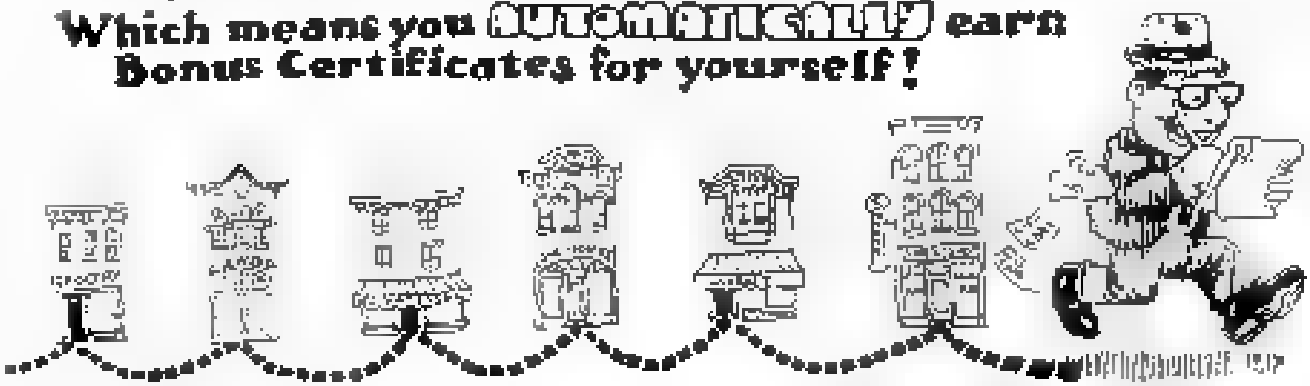
plus many many more nationally-advertised brand name items. from Samsonite Luggage, GE Washing Machines, Martex Towels,.. up to an entire household of furniture by Baumritter— **All FREE for Bazooka Gift Certificates!**

11

Each time you make a NEW PLACEMENT of a Bazooka Gift Certificate Deal you AUTOMATICALLY set your customer up to give you repeat orders!

(The faster a retailer colects Certificates, the faster he can cash them in for FREE GIFTS!)

Which means you AUTOMATICALLY earn Bonus Certificates for yourself!



12

Get the point?

It's FAST and EASY for both your retailers and you to get the wonderful free gifts in the

NEW & EXPANDED BAZOOKA GIFT CERTIFICATE DEAL!

13

BUT to BUY the BAZOOKA GIFT CERTIFICATE DEALS your retailers first have to know that they exist!

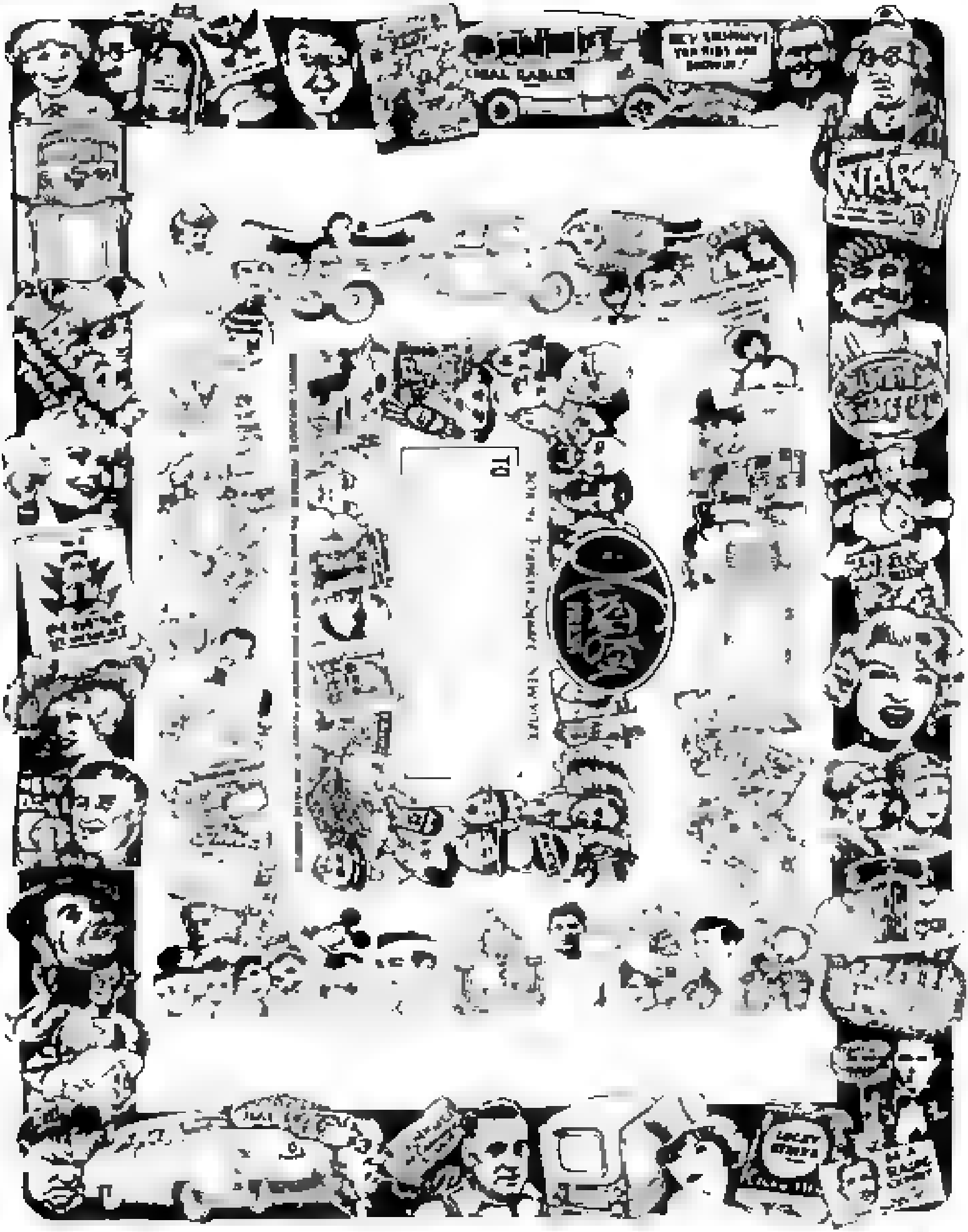
14

...WHICH IS WHY WE PREPARED THIS BOOKLET

(so you could tell them about it!)

And which is also why we're giving YOU the chance to get these same great gifts for free...

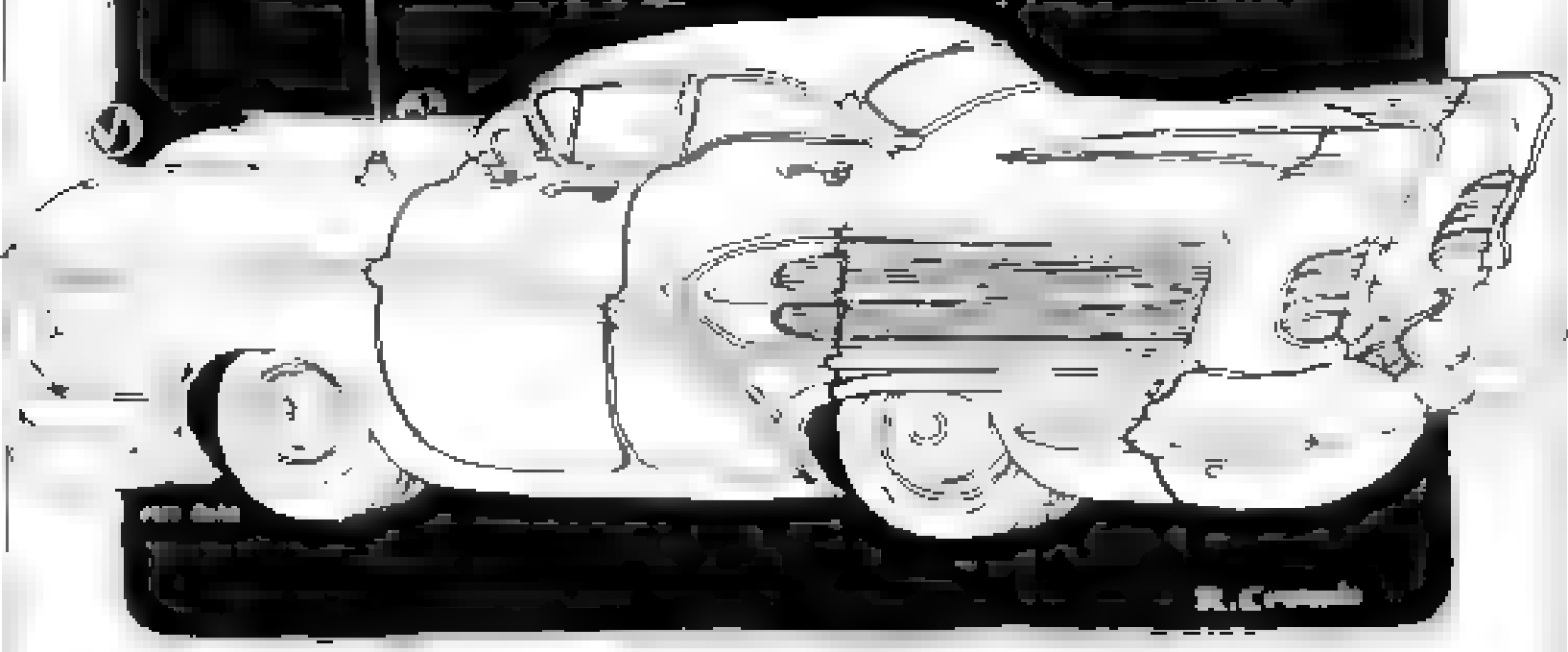
It's our way of saying "THANKS A MILLION!"


TO
WJR

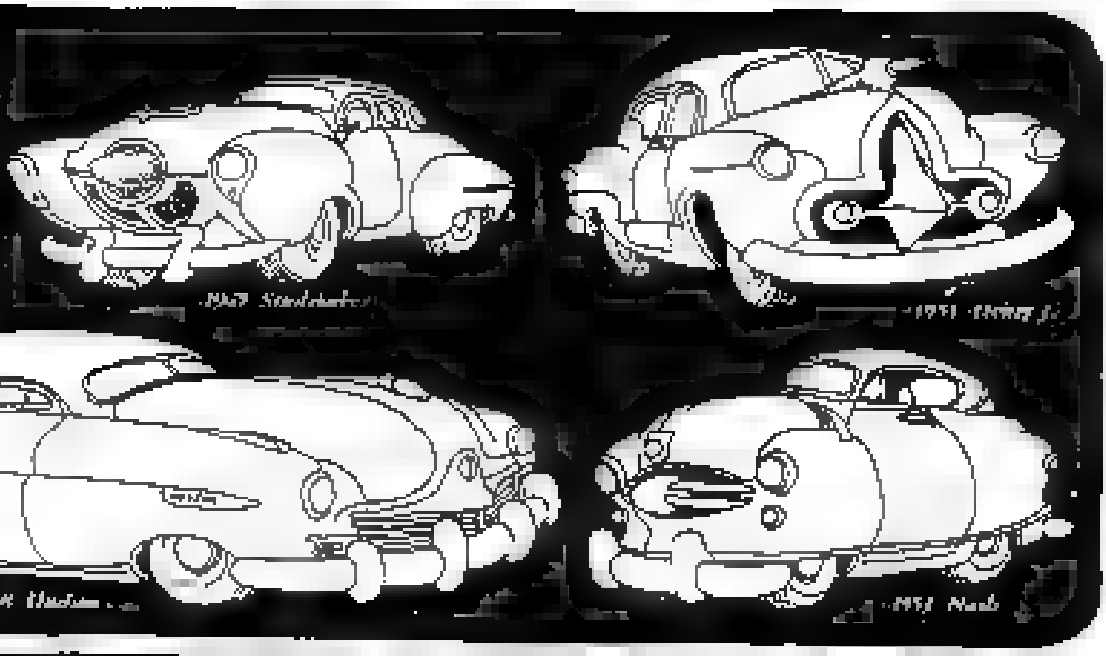
THE HEAP YEARS of the Auto - 1946-59

As we stand on the threshold of "The Great Society," [illegible] new and [illegible] of hopes and aspirations [illegible] we must not forget that we are [illegible] of what has been doubted by the [illegible] "The Post War Era." The [illegible] Things [illegible] agreed that [illegible] pushed [illegible] was "The Age [illegible]" [illegible] housing developments, unlovely shopping centers, [illegible] fall [illegible] useless overpotent [illegible] that kept [illegible] confused [illegible] knowing [illegible]

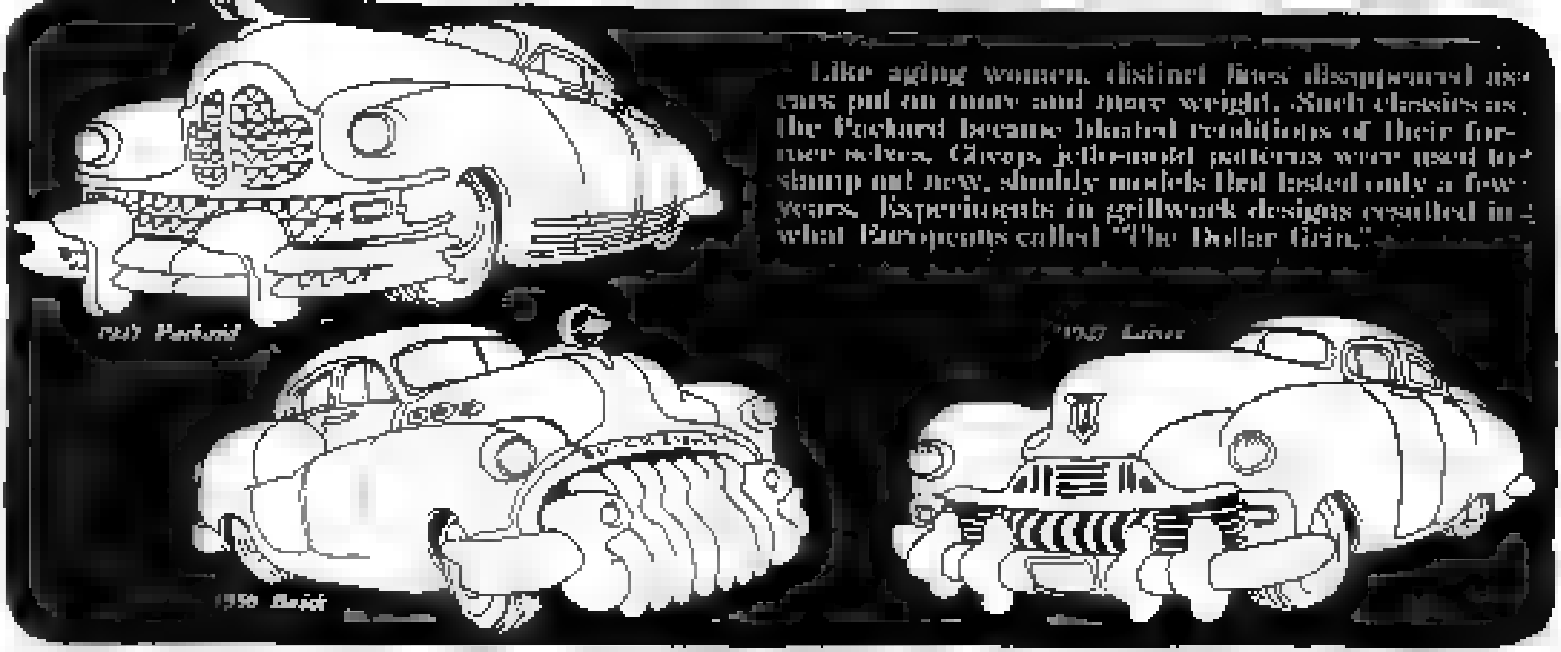
[illegible] was [illegible] of the "heap" Nowhere [illegible] single [illegible] the [illegible] of the Post War [illegible] Heap Years.



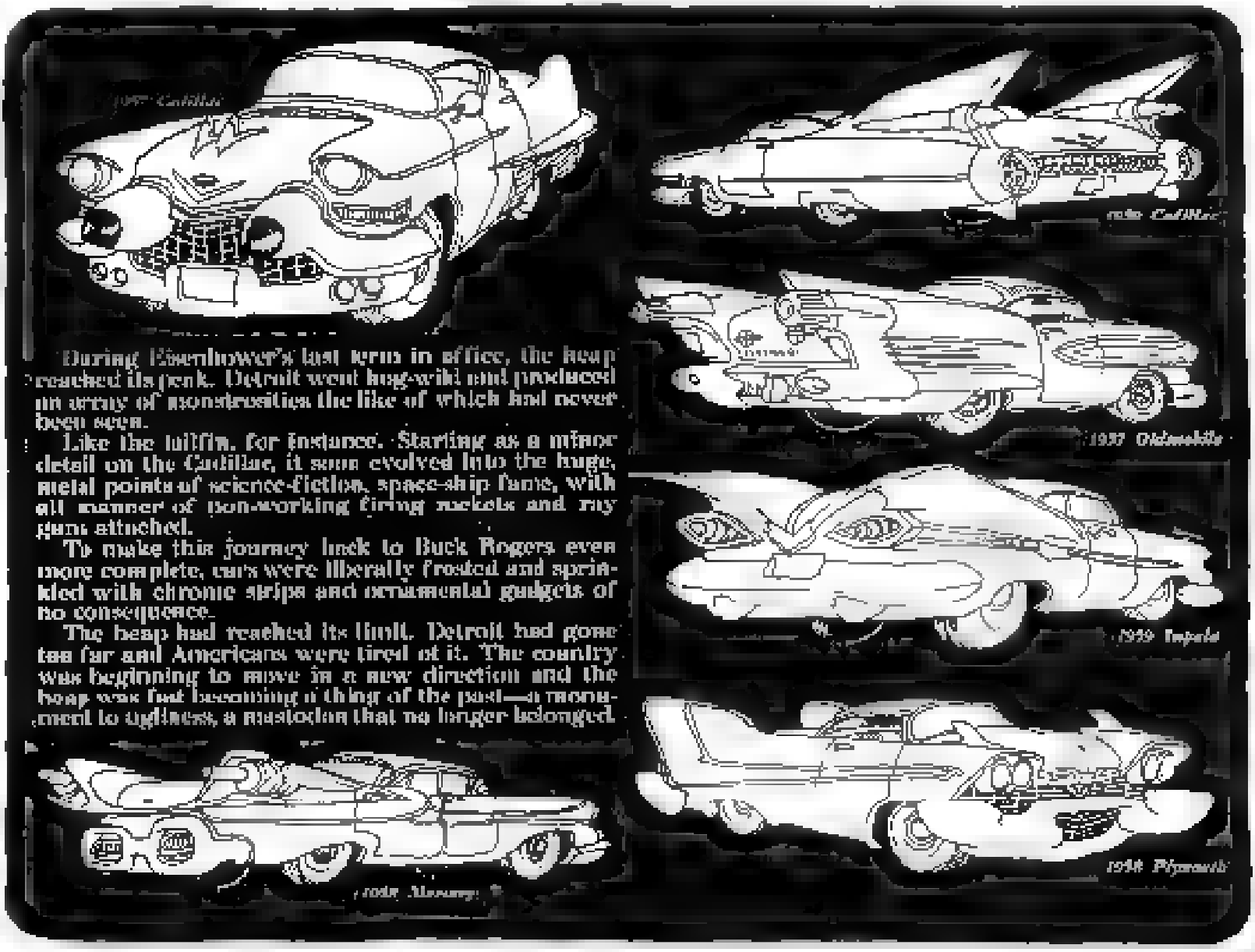
In 1946, America looked eagerly toward the future. We expected an age of supersonic living, an ultimate, streamlined, atomic-powered world of robot machines and sweeping silver skyways that curve between and around mile-high buildings in mechanized cities. Cars tried to look like jet planes. The tear-drop shape Detroit called it.



Like aging women, distinct lines disappeared as cars put on more and more weight. Such classics as the Packard became bloated renditions of their former selves. Cheaper jelly-mold patterns were used to stamp out new, shoddy models that lasted only a few years. Experiments in grillwork designs resulted in what Europeans called "The Dollar Grin."



By the middle fifties, the front ends were beginning to find their place in the average man's life as a symbol of power and freedom, a means of escape. Cars began to look tough, mean, belligerent. Horsepower was the magic word, and cars started sporting fancy names like "Fury," "Hornet," "Golden Hawk," "Thunderbird," "Firebird," "Thunderclouds," etc.



During Eisenhower's last term in office, the heap reached its peak. Detroit went hog-wild and produced an array of monstrosities the like of which had never been seen.

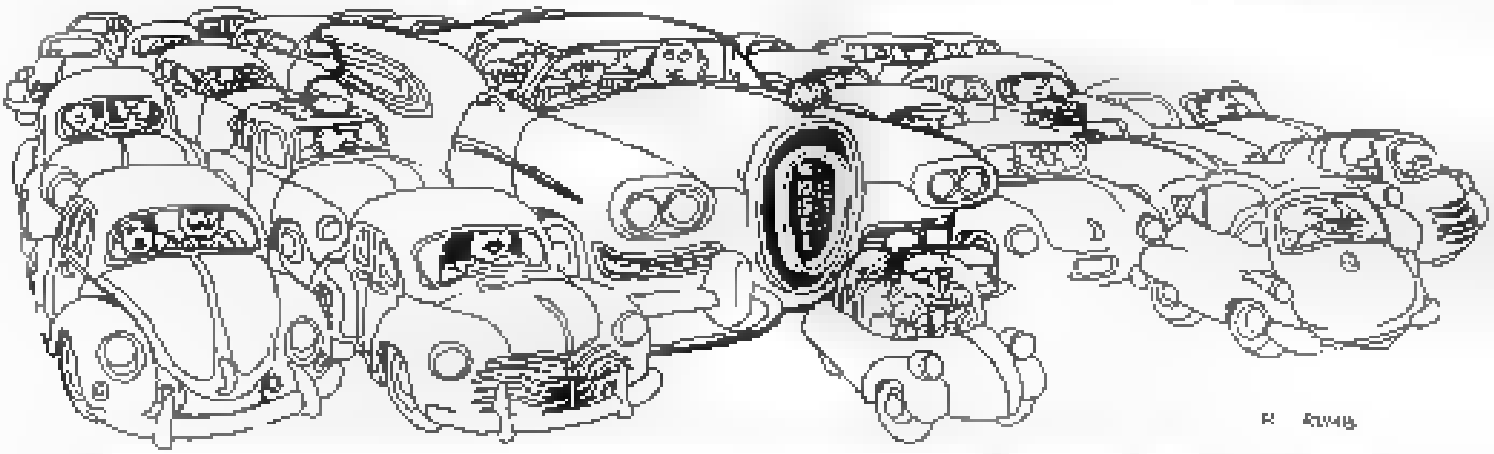
Like the tailfin, for instance. Starting as a minor detail on the Cadillac, it soon evolved into the huge, metal points of science-fiction, space-ship fame, with all manner of non-working firing rockets and ray guns attached.

To make this journey back to Buck Rogers even more complete, cars were liberally frosted and sprinkled with chrome strips and ornamental gadgets of no consequence.

The heap had reached its limit. Detroit had gone too far and Americans were tired of it. The country was beginning to move in a new direction and the heap was fast becoming a thing of the past—a monument to ugliness, a mastodon that no longer belonged.

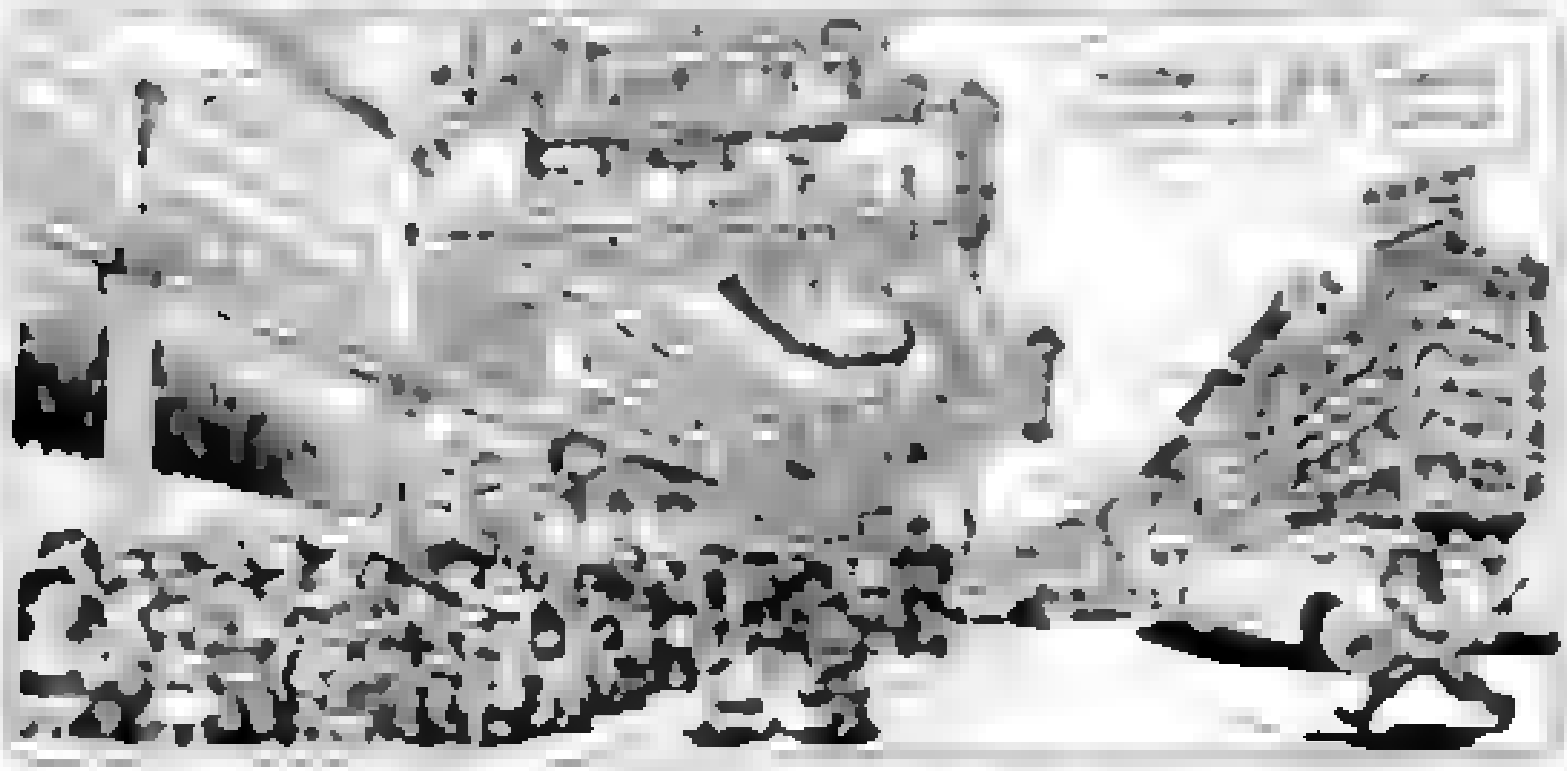
One last desperate fling was made to keep the heap alive but it was a total disaster, a miserable failure. Nobody was buying heaps any more. Suddenly there were all these funny little Euro-car ads all over the place and Detroit saw the light. The "compact" was born. Then came the American sportscar. And now we've come full cycle and the big, powerful classic cars have hit the market again.

The heap is dead. They just don't make cars like that any more. It's as if it never was. Gone are the days when the hard of Detroit ruled the roads.



The Small Small Businessmen

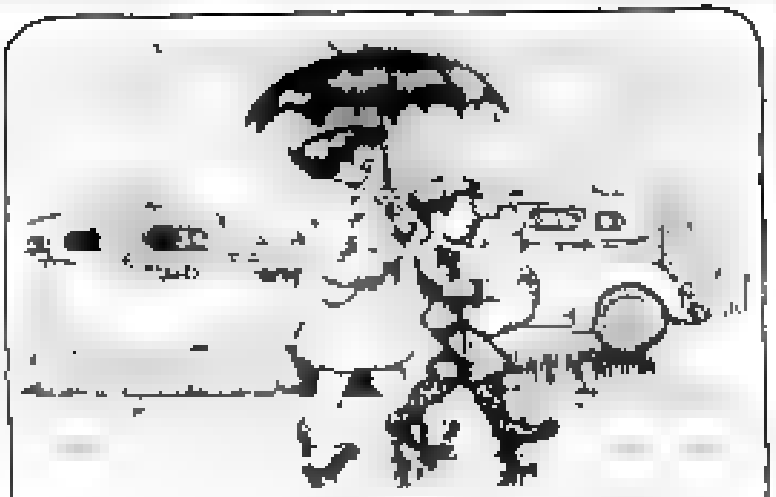
[illegible]



It was imperative to see every chapter for if by chance you didn't have the 20 cents it meant not only spending the afternoon alone but, what was worse, watching your pals when they returned, act out the missing episode. Looking back their theatrical antics were seem much better than anything that could be transferred on the screen but then it was no comedy for a 10-year-old boy.

Earning money was a skill handed down from older brother to younger much as the cobbler taught his trade to his son.

We fidgeted in school as the spring freshly was bring the skies a [illegible] for a three [illegible] clock rang. I [illegible] and it came often, we would race home [illegible] umbrella and then [illegible] to the subway station at 59th Street and Broadway. We were seeking for women who had [illegible] home.

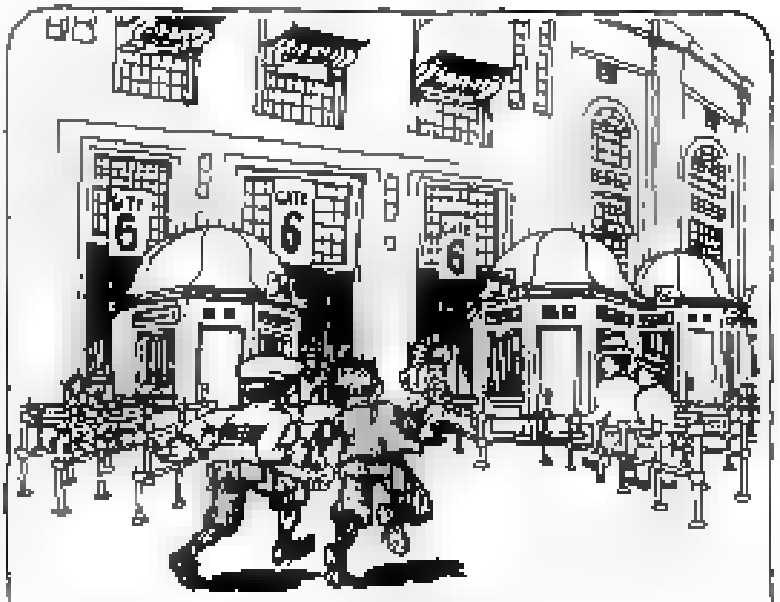


shopping on a clear day and returned on a spring [illegible] I [illegible] we would sheep. Walk you home, lady? 10 cents for five blocks, a quarter after that. Of course, she got the umbrella, and you got what [illegible] Angie's sheep had and hoped for a short run. [illegible] was a risky business as long as the rain held out and [illegible] one might squeeze in four trips depending on the competition. [illegible] the while [illegible] going soaked and explaining to your mother how [illegible] coming home purposely for an [illegible] enter [illegible] a good day [illegible] might make enough for [illegible] money [illegible] aside and [illegible] jingling in your pocket. [illegible] after church, we would race

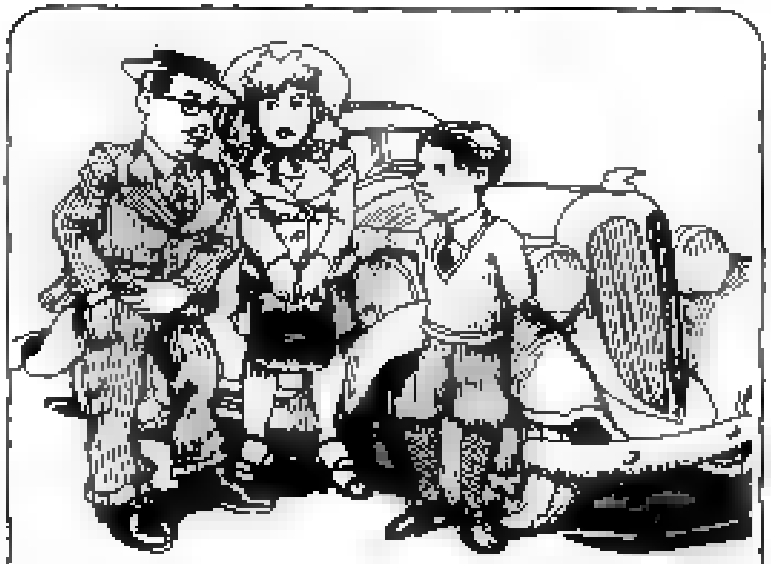
home, change clothes, then run across Edgecombe Avenue into Highbridge Park. Every Sunday one box. Mal's representative ran a craps game on the path, the main thoroughfare through the park. We would linger on the fringe of the crowd of men until Big Angie had got the game underway. Then he would point at random at two of us and we would dash over to Amsterdam Avenue to Coates's Candy Store for a case of cold soda. When we returned Angie would give us each 50 cents and we would squat by the case and deliver soda to thirsty men. Angie charged them $1 a bottle. After the game we would stack the empties in the case and carry them behind Angie to keep away other kids from snatching a bottle while we had our hands full. There were 48 bottles in the case, which came to 80 cents on return, so the day's profit for us was 90 cents with the original half buck from Big Angie.

The kid whom Angie ignored would also hasten to the same candy store to buy Italian twists. The Italians either smoked or chewed them. The Ita[illegible] had a bocce court [illegible] and the Sunday games were for money. There were big turnouts. Sunday dinner was over and the jackets were off and the sleeve garters of purple and yellow [illegible] on the sun. The little beauties [illegible] put on. When a man tossed a winning ball, he would throw his rope down and grind it into the sand. Keep an eye on him [illegible] time all he [illegible] which cost 5 cents at the store would be gold or whatever the Italian would bear.

In summer money came easier. We would walk down to 155th Street, across the viaduct and Mac Combs Dam Bridge (as a kid I thought they called it that because it was so ugly) and over to Yankee Sta-



dium. We had to get there very early to head up the line of kids between the ages of ten and twelve to turn turnstiles as the customers grabbed the tickets. Older boys worked as vendors. We began about 11 when the batting practice fans arrived and continued to spin until the third inning was over. We were then given 75 cents and allowed to watch the rest of the game. This was hotdog heaven, the days of Gehrig and Ruth. But making that shape-up every day was rough, because if you missed, it was a long, hot walk home with the smell of mustard and lemonade in your head.



I never worked the Polo Grounds although it was only 10 blocks from home. But its proximity gave us an opportunity for extra income, offering to "watch" cars parked on the Harlem River Speedway and the veiled threat usually got you a dime. Some kids would wipe down the cars entrusted to them, relying on the kindness of the owners for an extra tip. Once in a great while we would park cars for a big Stadium event.

But we hurried home practically penniless the night Schmeling beat Joe Louis, because we were too close to Harlem and Harlem had lost heavily.

One Irish kid in the neighborhood had a steady clientele of Orthodox Jews for whom he lit stoves every Saturday morning. He had one or two customers who wouldn't handle money on the Sabbath, and he would walk them to the subway and deposit their fare. He had two hours work every Saturday, movie money guaranteed, and delicious knishes during the week.

A job as a delivery boy could earn you money, but it completely defeated the purpose. You had to work all day Saturday, and if you were working, how could you go to the movies? Anyway, delivery boys went with girls, and who needed that?

Almost every day we would scour cellars for deposit bottles. It was hard work since most of the janitors also wanted the deposit.

Our theaters were the Drury Lane, the Rio, the Fordham and the Uptown. Not usually we were stuck with the same theater every Saturday for years on end. Mid-week holidays and special occasions we often went to the movies but we would avoid our Saturday theater with a vengeance. Once you started a serial you had to see all 15 chapters, and on the day of the last chapter the shrewd manager would show the first chapter of the next serial. Alas, we were hooked for another 14 weeks. The only way out was to grow old enough to notice girls.

But these innocent pursuits of the Almighty Dime seem to have gone the way of the high cost of living. The only small, small businesses I see now are shoe shine boys. Recently I came out of the subway into a pouring rain and looked for the kid with the umbrella. But all I saw were three cabs with off-duty signs parked in front of Riker's...

Punchlines for "Monster Greetings" cards (punchlines appeared on the back of the cards with a photo of a model or models in monster makeup).

Page 92, left to right

I Love Your Beautiful Eyes
All Four of Them!

There'll Never Be Another You
Thank Goodness!

You're the Caveman Type
Hairy and Ugly!

When I Grow Up I'll Be Just Like You
Old and Ugly!

I Love You When You Smile
I Love Fangs!

I Keep Your Picture in My Room
To Scare Off Ghosts!

I'd Like to Go Out With You
When They Clean Your Cage!

I Was at a Monster Bazaar
And I Won You!

You May Not Be Handsome or Brilliant
But Nobody's Perfect!

Page 93 left to right.

I Like You
But I Have Strange Tastes!

I'd Like to Gaze Into Your Eyes
If I Could Find the Other One!

I'd Like to Give You a Big Squeeze
[Photo of a head in a vise.

When I'm Next to You
Even I Look Good

You Do a Great Twist
At Least Your Nose Does.

Isn't it Great to Be Alive?
But How Would You Know?

You Really Use Your Head
Who Else Would Want To?

You're Out of This World
Stay There!

If You Work Your Fingers to the Bone, What Do You Get?
Bony Fingers!

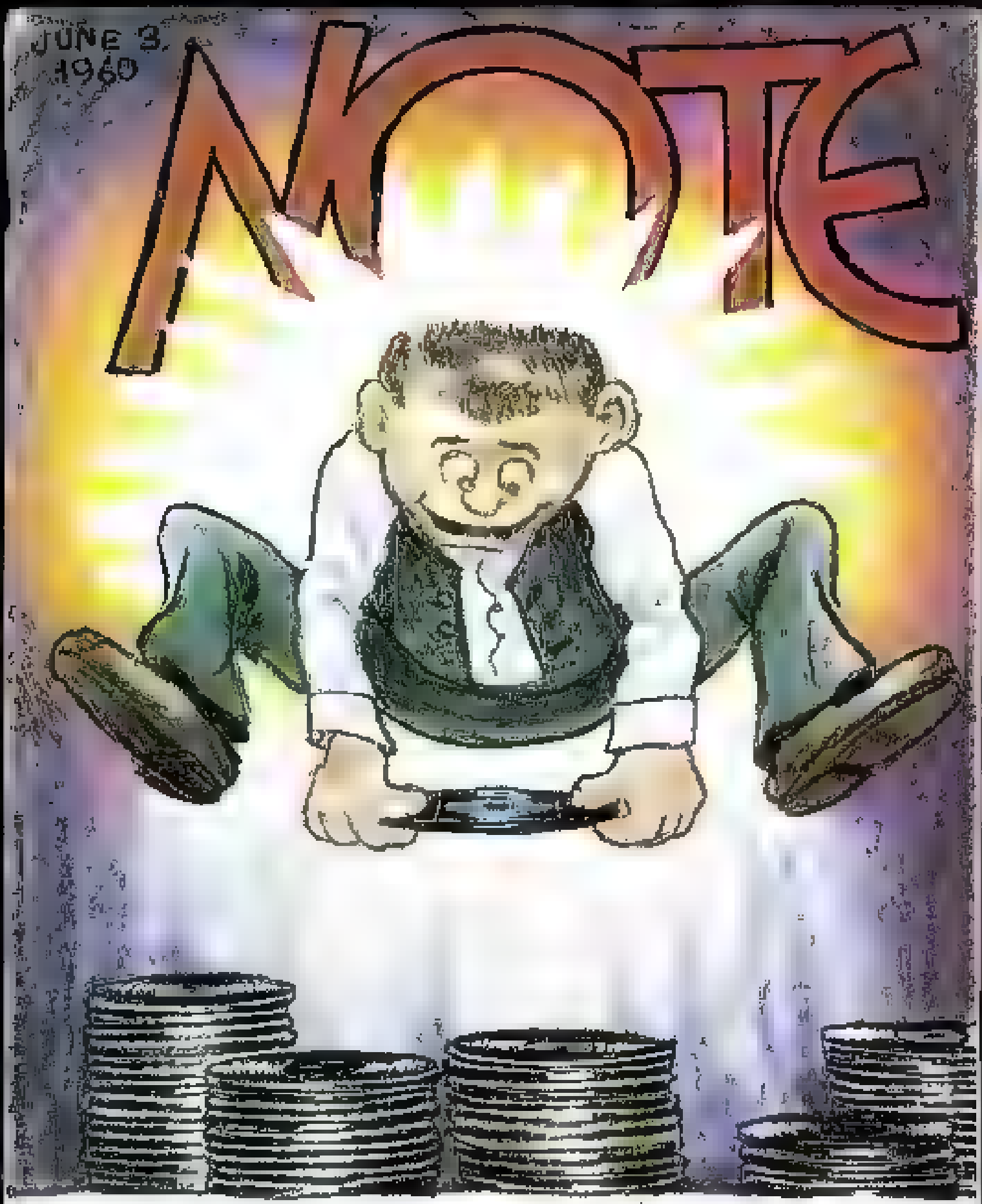
Punchlines for greeting cards on page 96
Left **Get well soon, signed Nobody**
Right **You could have a full-length mirror!**

4 APRIL 1960

NOTE

JUNE 3, 1960

NOTE



PAHLS FINDING "ZULUS BALL"/"WORKING MAN BLUES" BY KING OLIVER ON GENNETT LABEL

NOTE
TOTAL DESTRUCTION IS AT HAND!

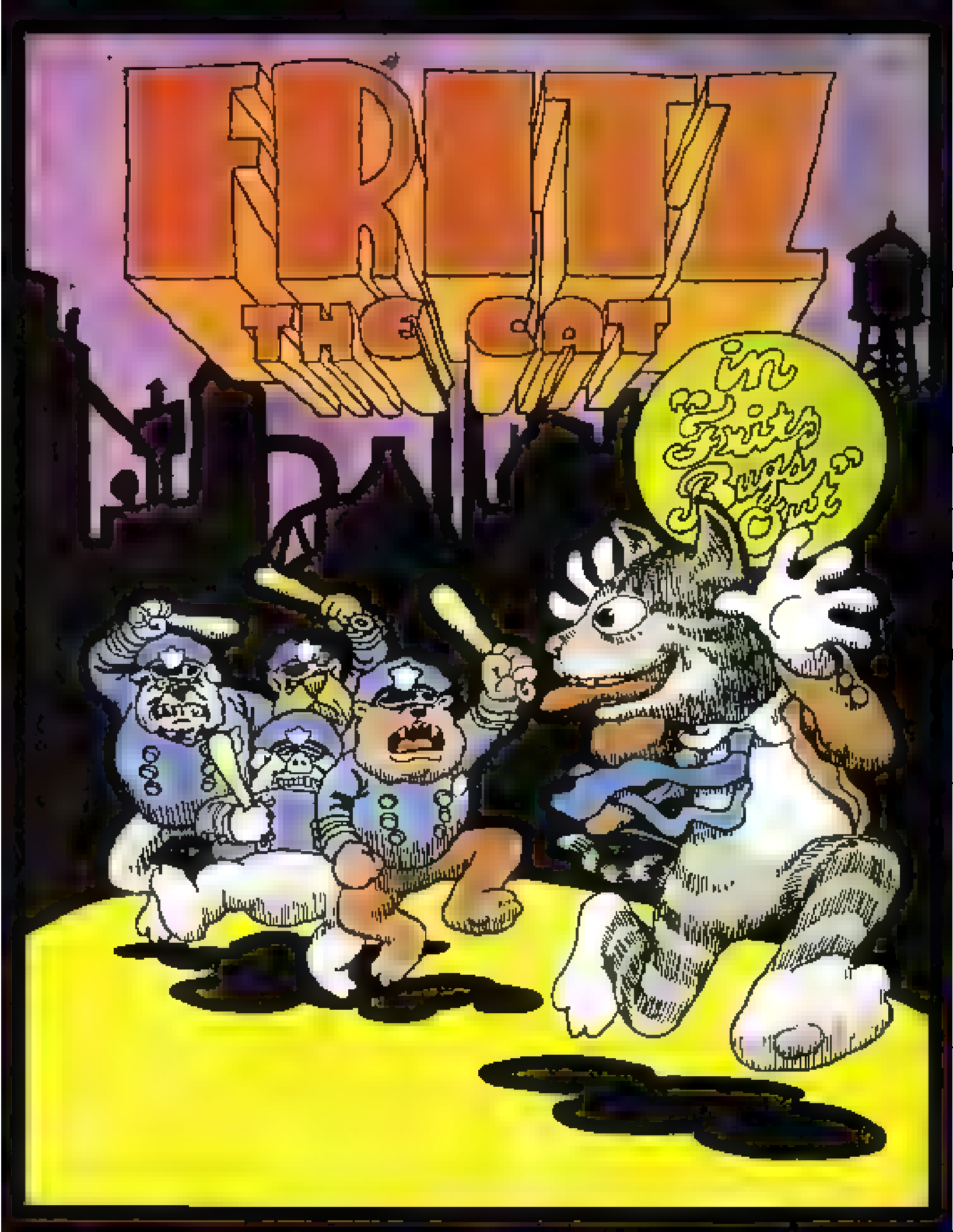
note

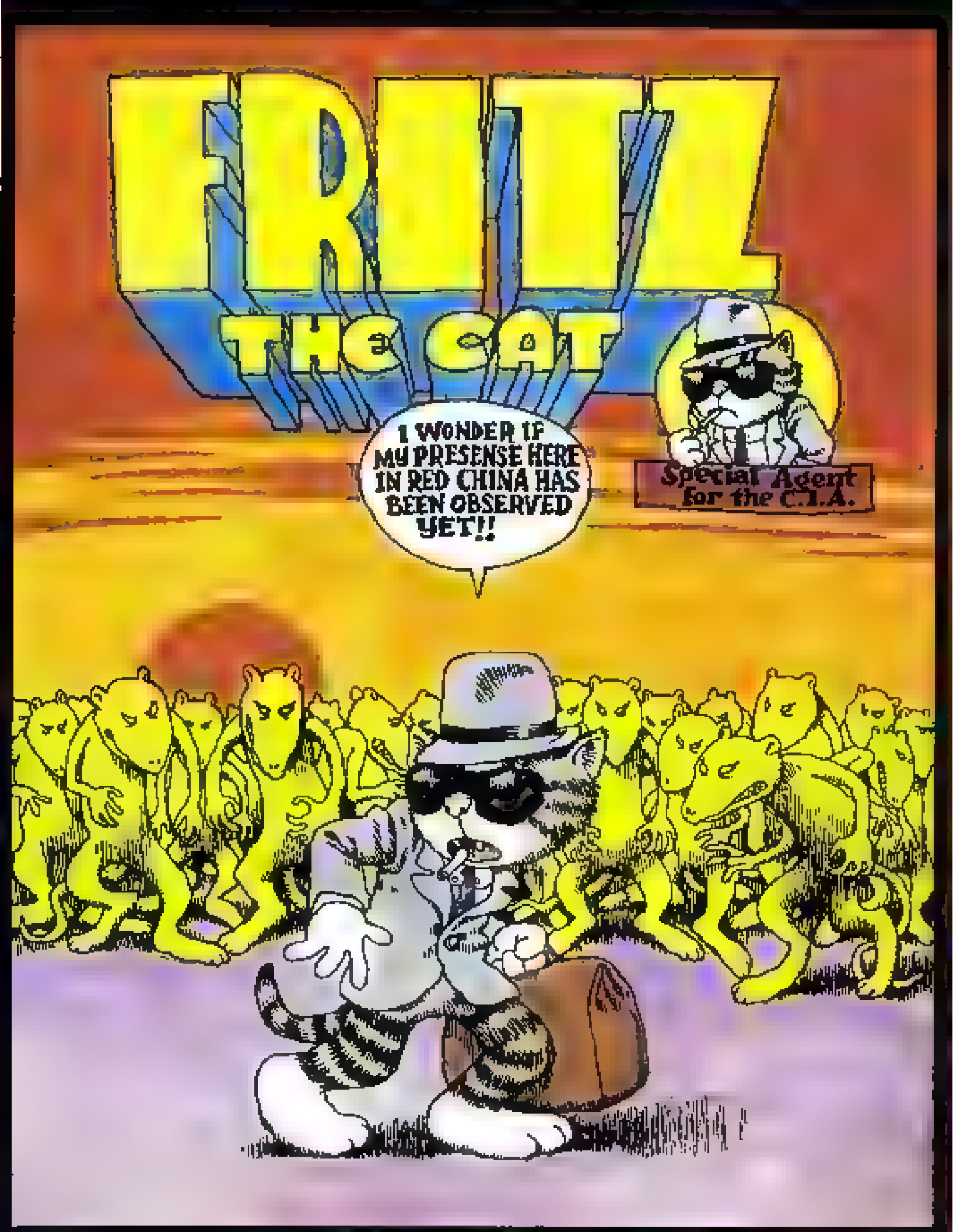
SUNDAY
28 MAY 1961

note

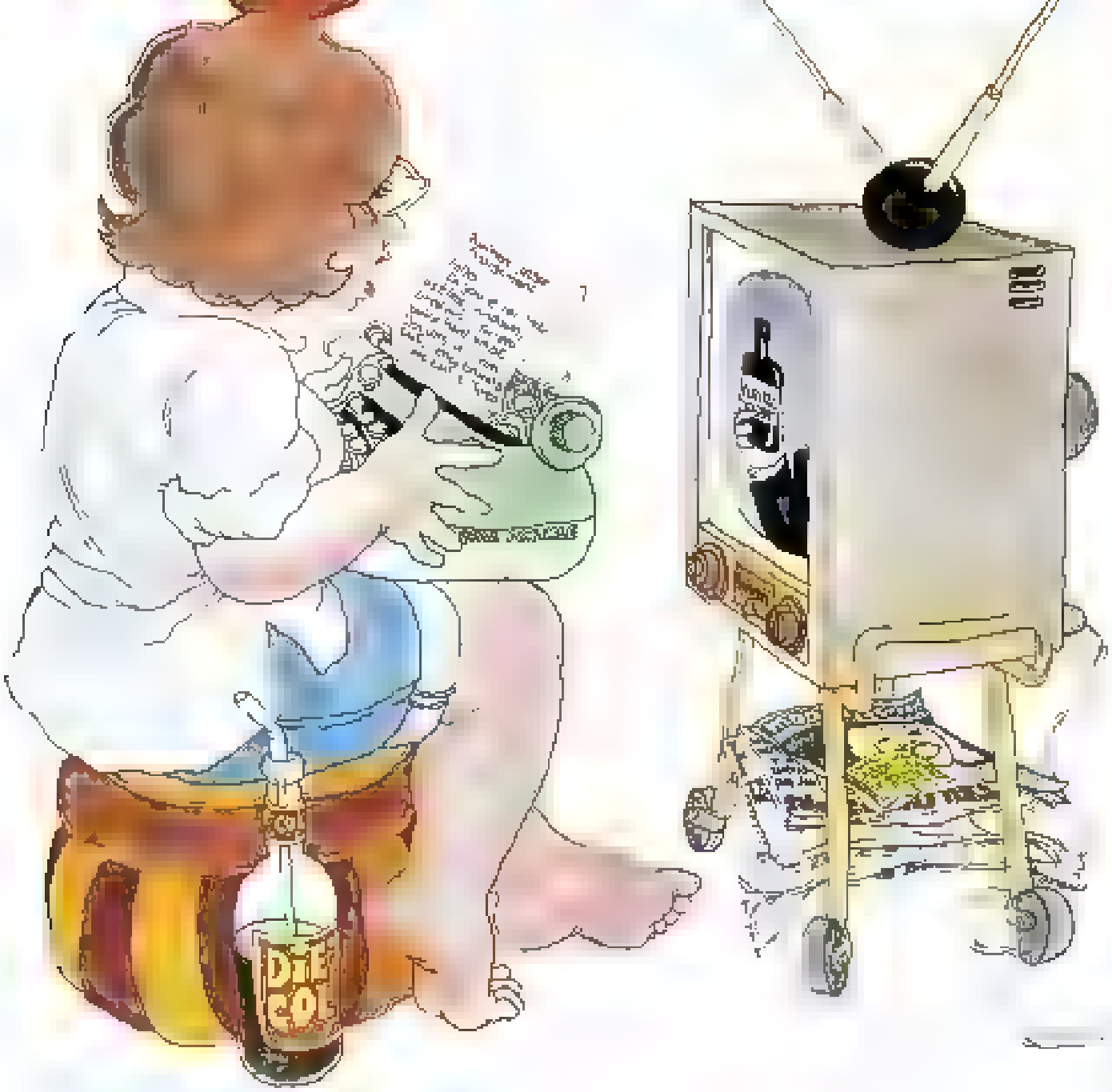
SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER

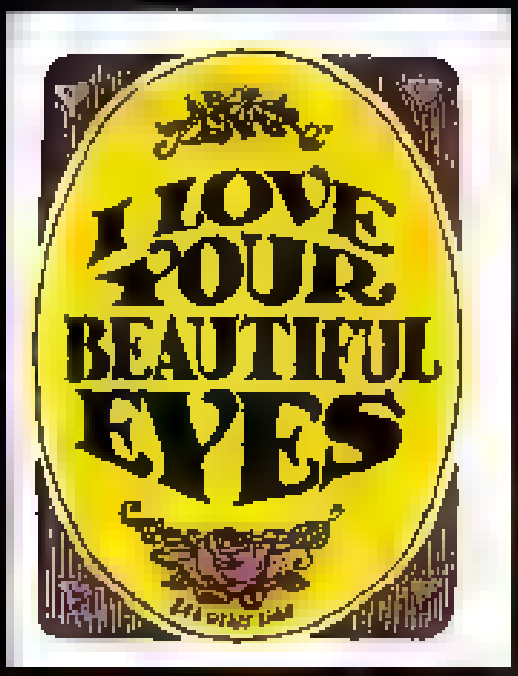
CLEVELAND WELCOMES YOU!


FRILL
THE CAT
In Grinch Rinsh Ouch


FRITZ THE CAT
I WONDER IF MY PRESENSE HERE IN RED CHINA HAS BEEN OBSERVED YET!!
Special Agent for the C.I.A.

Roberta



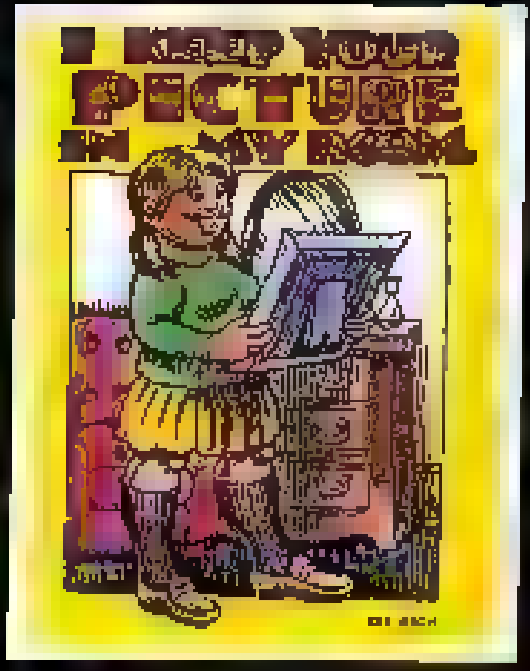

I LOVE YOUR BEAUTIFUL EYES

There'll never be another

You're the caveman type

When I grow up I'll be like you!

I LOVE WHEN YOU SMILE!


I KEEP YOUR PICTURE IN MY POCKET

I'D LIKE TO GO OUT WITH YOU

I WAS AT A MONSTER BALL

You may not be handsome or brilliant...
See back

I LIKE YOU

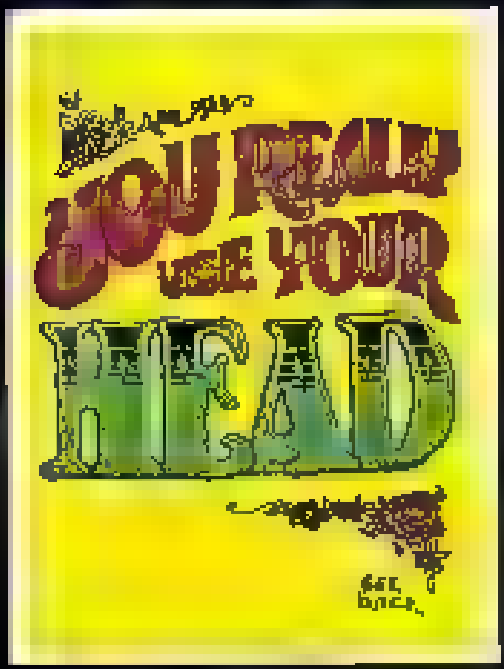
I'D LIKE TO GAZE INTO YOUR EYES

I'd like to give you a BIG SQUEEZE

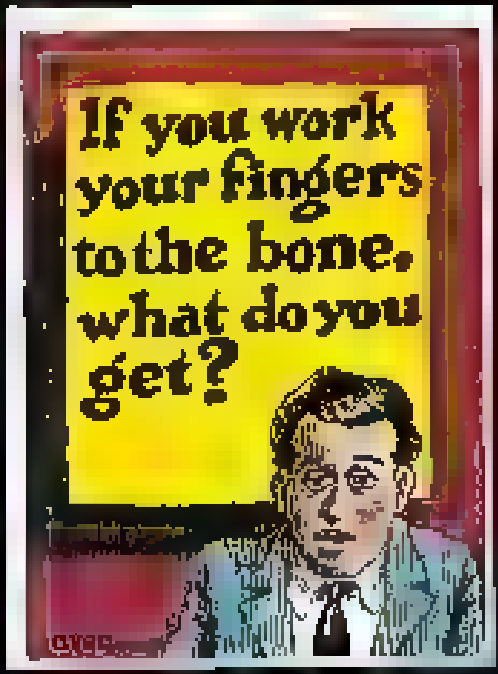
When I'm next to you..

YOU DO A GREAT TWIST

ISN'T IT GREAT TO BE ALIVE?


YOU REALLY USE YOUR HEAD

You're out of this world


If you work your fingers to the bone, what do you get?

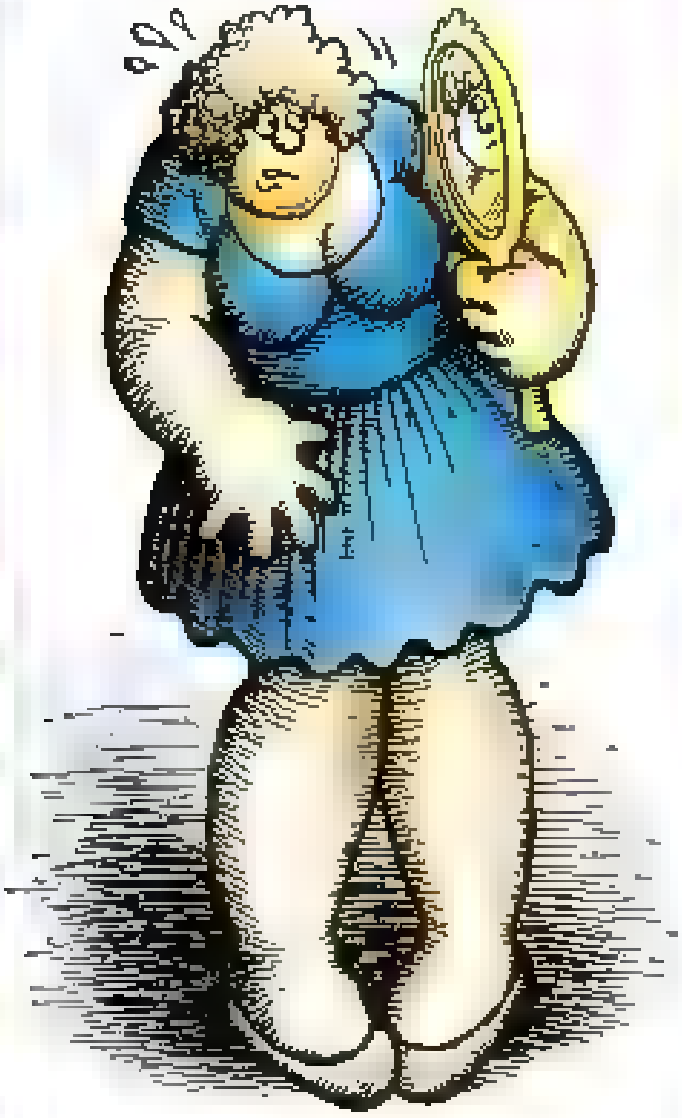
do you know what's brown and round and weighs 7000 pounds and says "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" in German?
...a Ge
chocolate
cake bi
to hold
your c

*Happy Birthday

nobody wants you when you're down and out.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

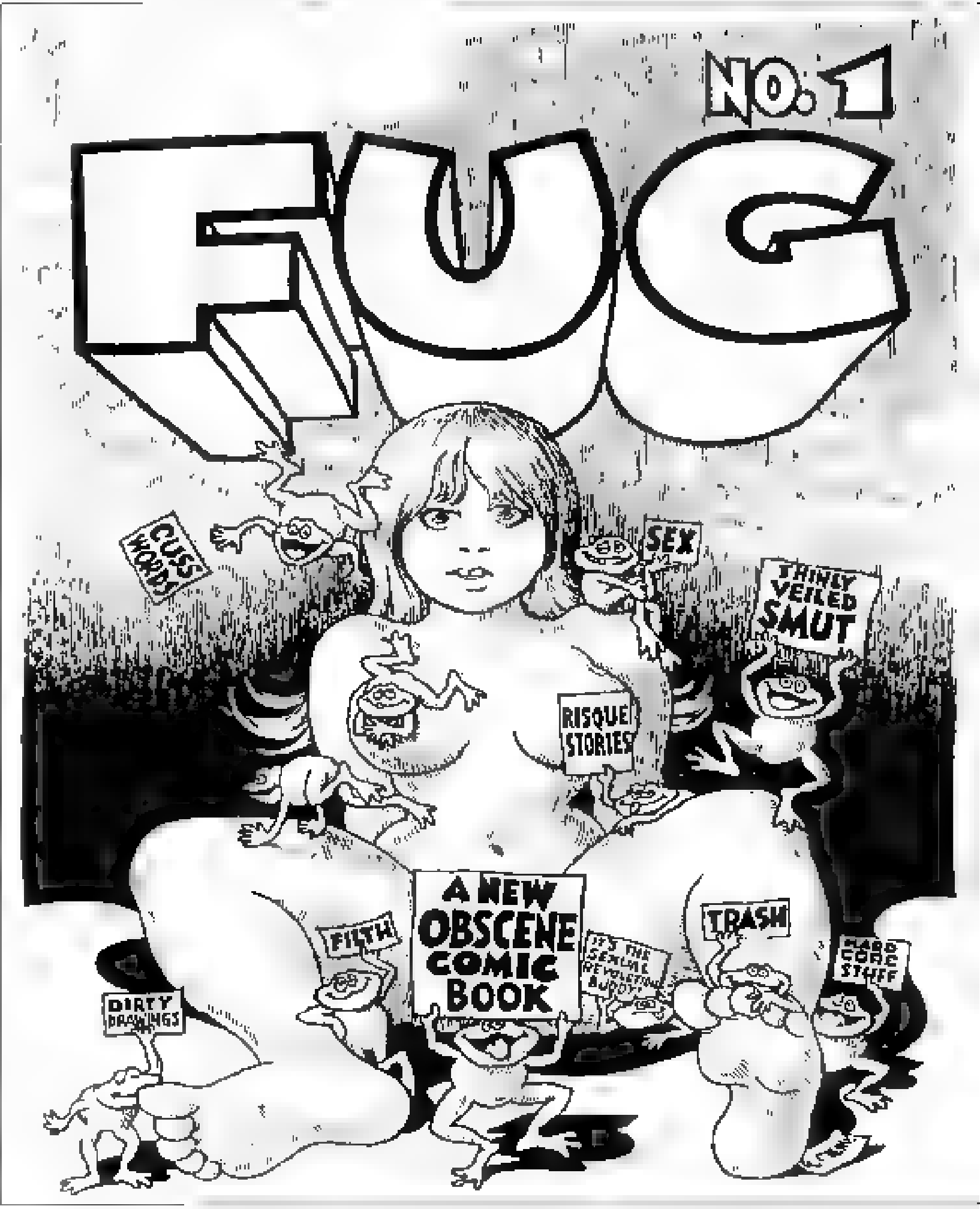
and don't worry if you find a few more wrinkles when you look in the mirror! CHEER UP! Things could be a lot worse!



happy birthday

I WAS FEELING BLUE BECAUSE I WAS BROKE AND YOUR BIRTHDAY WAS COMING UP, SO JUST TO KEEP MY MIND BUSY, I DECIDED TO RE COVER THE OLD SOFA THAT I BOUGHT AT A SECOND-HAND STORE YEARS AGO.

[Card to Mike Britt, January 1964]


NO. 1
FUG
CUSS WORDS
SEX
THINLY VEILED SMUT
RISQUE STORIES
A NEW OBSCENE COMIC BOOK
FILTH
DIRTY DRAWINGS
TRASH
HARD CORE STUFF

Fritz the Cat
FRITZ IS A SOPHISTICATED UP-TO-THE-MINUTE YOUNG FELINE COLLEGE STUDENT WHO LIVES IN A MODERN "SUPERCITY" OF MILLIONS OF ANIMALS YES, NOT UNLIKE PEOPLE IN THEIR MANNERS AND MORALS
WHAT A MOB IN THE PARK TODAY!
FEH! HIGH SCHOOL PUNKS!
TRUE STRICTLY PSEUDO HIPPIES!
IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS IN THE PARK ON WEEKENDS DISGUSTING!
GHOD! THE PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH PHONIES!
THEY ALL THINK THEY'RE SO SENSITIVE
IT'S AN INSULT TO MY GENUINELY SENSITIVE SOUL
YOU'RE ABOUT AS "GENUINELY SENSITIVE" AS A POWER SHOVEL!
I'M MORE SENSITIVE THAN YOU'LL EVER KNOW
I'M THE MOST SENSITIVE I GOT MORE SENSITIVITY THAN BOTH OF YOU GUYS
LISTEN! LISTEN! EVERY PORE OF MY BEING IS DRIPPING WITH PAIN AND AGONY! MY ACUTE SENSITIVITY IS SECOND TO NONE!
!
NO! NO! ME!
SHHH
COOL

GIT OUT TH' GUITARS!
COME ON, GAZY, LET'S PLAY!
GIMME MINE!

WUNCE AH HAD JH LI ODLE GURL WHO WUZ IN LUV WITH MEHEE HEE
OH HOE HOE HOE HEE
TWANG TWANG TWANG

WELLA WELLA WELLA BAYBEE AH'M AYEW BAYBEE YEAH YEAH YEEAH
OOBA OOBA BA BA OOH
THRUM THRUM BLUM
BLEERP BLOPPG BLONG

HUMMA HUMMA OOMA
OH YES YES
BRANG PIZZZ
GRONNG BANGA
BIZZONG BAM BOONG
PIZZAZZ BLUP

PUFF PANT
HEAVE SIGH CHOKE
GULP
WHEEZE PANT

DUM CHICKS!
EASILY IMPRESSED BY SPADES
IT'S A THING

UHHH I'M GONNA SPLIT SEE YOU GUYS LATER
HANG LOOSE MAN HEH HEH. HORNY BASTARD. HEH HEH
LATER FRITZ HEH HEH

YUM!

PSSST HEY MAN!

THERE'S A CAT PUSHIN 'SH_T' DOWN AT THE 'PURPLE PEE POT' FOR A NICKEL A BAG
YEAH? YEAH, MAN?
SOMEBUDDY GIMME A NICKEL
HERE'S ONE
I GOT ONE
HERE!

HOT DAWG!
HEH HEH. I'M JUST A DEV.
?
?
?
ZZZZZZZ

AAARGHH!
OOGAGH
OOHH
CHOKE SPUT
GROAN
GAG
? ! ?

SOB SOB MOAN MOURN
BITTER TEARS WEEP BLUB
HEY ARE YOU CRAZY?
MAYBE HE'S A EPILEPTIC HEY YA HURT CHASELF OR SOMETHIN'?
GEE
POUND
RUPTURED MEBBE?
MY SOUL IS TORMENTED
OH NO!
GEE
HOW AWFUL
I'VE BEEN UP AN DOWN THE FOUR CORNER'S OF THIS BIG OLD WORLD I'VE SEEN IT ALL AN DONE IT ALL
GEE SNIRP
OH WOW!
WE FOUGHT MANY A GOOD MAN AN LAID MANY A GOOD NOMAN I'VE HAD RICHES AND FAME AN ADVENTURE I'VE STOOD FACE TO FACE WITH DANGER AN DEATH COUNTLESS TIMES WHY, I'VE
HEY ARE YOU SOMEBODY FAMOUS?? THINK I SAW YOU IN A MOVIE ONCE
DON'T INTERRUPT! I'VE TASTED LIFE TO THE FULLEST AN STILL MY SOUL CRIES OUT YES CRIES OUT IN ITS HUNGRY TORTURED RACKED QUEST MORE!
THINGS AREN'T ALL BAD
GEE, HE'S HAN-SOME
LOOK AT TH' GOOD SIDE OF LIFE
YOU! YOU CAN HELP ME! YOU JUST SAVE ME! FOR, BY SO DOING, YOU TOO, WILL BE SAVED!
YOU'RE CUTE
WELL I'D LIKE TO BUT WHAT CAN I DO? TEE HEE

AH LITTLE SWEET ONE WITH YOUR HEART OF GOLD, I KNOW OF A PLACE WHERE WE CAN BE ALONE TO JOIN OUR SOULS IN SACRED TRUTH
HEY!
GEE YOU'RE GOOD LOOKIN'

I WANNA BE IN ON THIS THING.
YEAH! WHAT ABOUT MY SOUL YA FUNK?
GURP

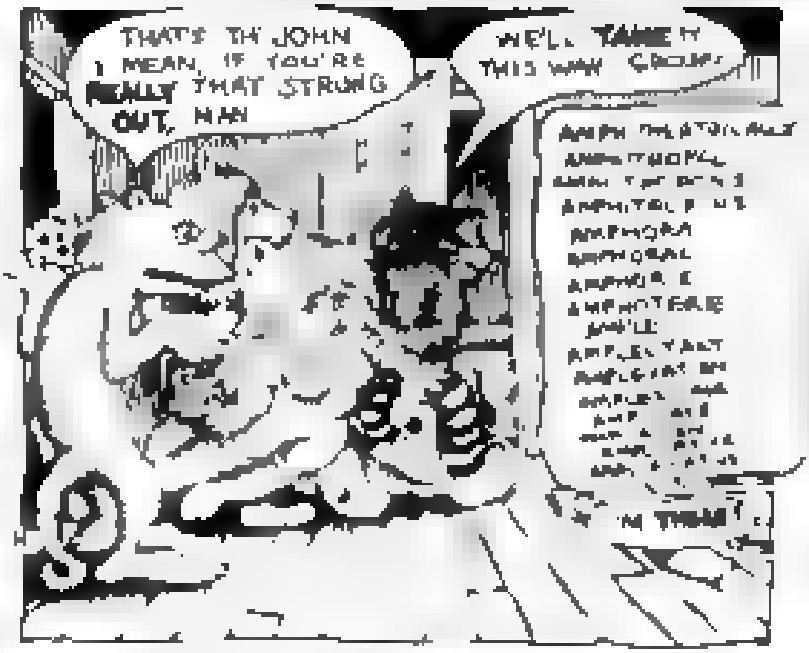
HMM...FOUR IN A BED. THAT'S A KICK I HAVEN'T TRIED YET!
WHAT?
HUH?

AHEM YES YES! TOGETHER WE SHALL ALL LEARN THE REAL EXISTENTIAL ESSENSE OF THE LIFE FORCE!
YES EXISTENTIAL, I HEARD THAT WORD ONCE.
WHAT'S IT MEAN?
IT MEANS, LIKE COOL GEAR YOU KNOW, STUPID.
YOU ARE A TRUE GENIUS FRITZ
OH

ABAYEUS ABAKIAL ABEREDARLEN ABLATIVE ABLUENT ABREACTION ABSCISSUS AB
KNOCK KNOCK
YES, GOD YES!
I'LL GET IT GODDAMN
GREAT! GREAT SEE IT MAN!

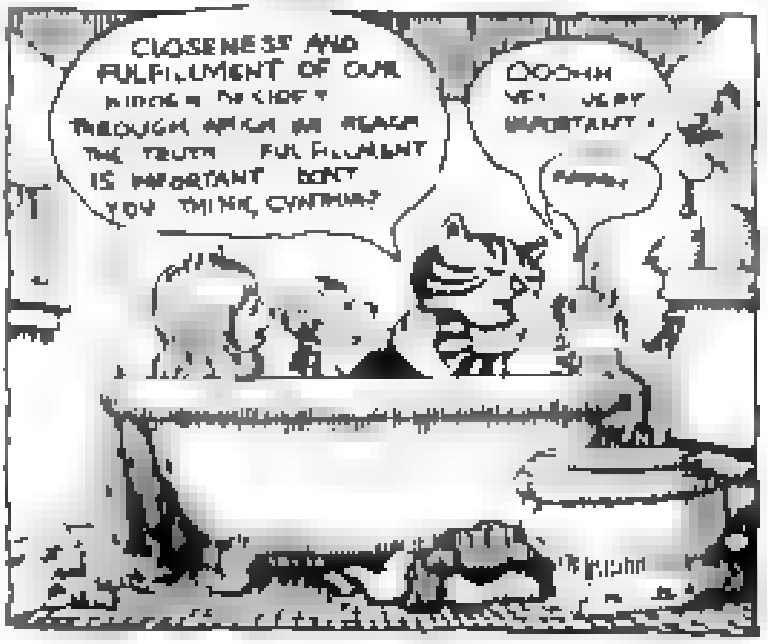
HEY FRITZ THE CAT HAS BECOME STUD OF THE YEAR
WHAT'S HAPPENING MAN?
ABSCOND ABSYNTHE ABUTTLE

HMM! ANYBODY USING THAT ROOM?


THAT'S TH JOHN I MEAN, IF YOU'RE REALLY OUT, MAN
WE'LL TAKE IT THIS WAY CROSS

A NEW WORLD OF EXPERIENCE AWAITS US MY LOVES THIS BATH TUB IS TRANSFORMED INTO A SPACE CAPSULE OF TRUTH AND LOVE
WOW IS THIS WILD
YES! YES! ONLY WE NEED CLOSENESS LIKE THIS CAN WE JUST CLOSE TO KNOW EACH OTHER

YES! VERY GOOD CYNTHIA DARLING! NEED CLOSENESS ARE YOU FEEL A PERCEPTIVE GROWING WE MUST GET VERY CLOSE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE
OUH LET'S GET CLOSE TOGETHER
YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL

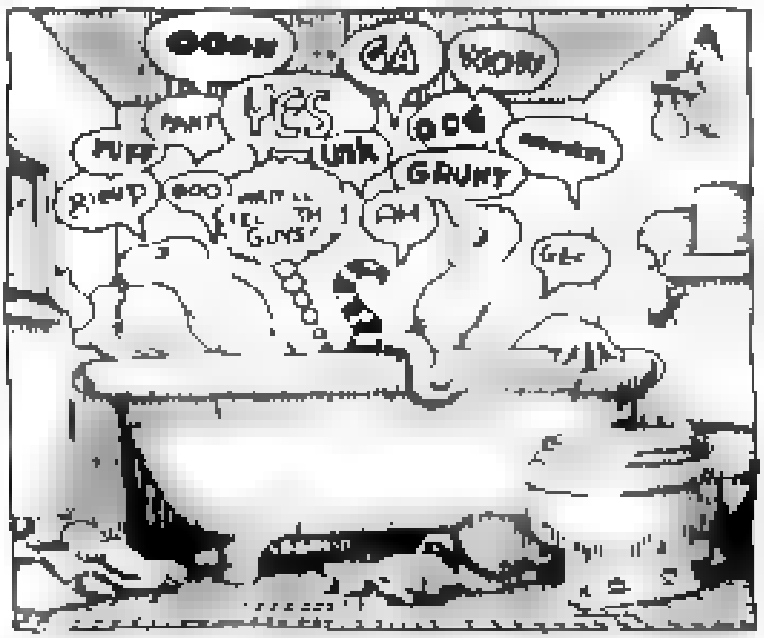

CLOSENESS AND FULFILLMENT OF OUR INNER INSIGHT THROUGH WHICH WE REACH THE TRUTH FULFILLMENT IS IMPORTANT DON'T YOU THINK, CYNTHIA?
OOOHH VERY VERY IMPORTANT!

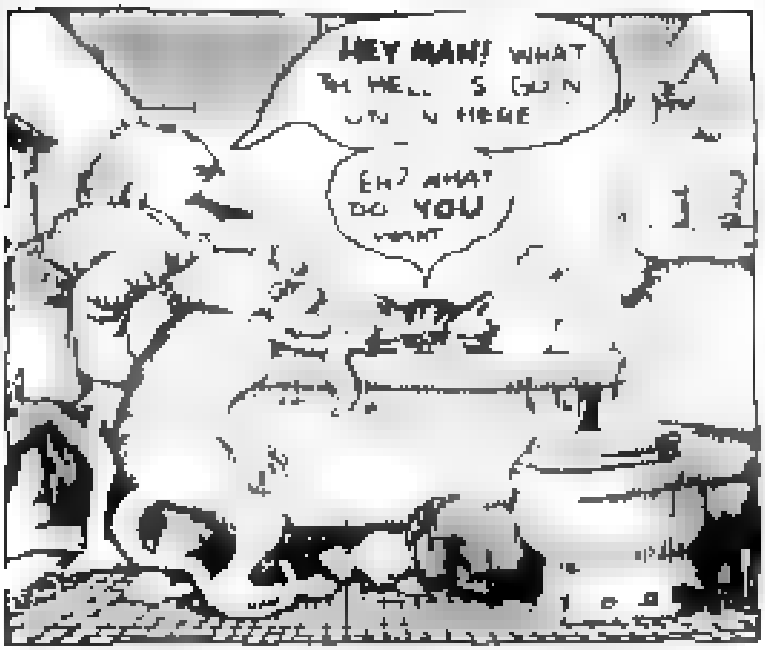
WOW! HEY! I THINK I'M GETTING TO THE TRUTH! YUM YEY IT'S ALL VERY CLEAR NOW
HEY
OH YEAH
OOH

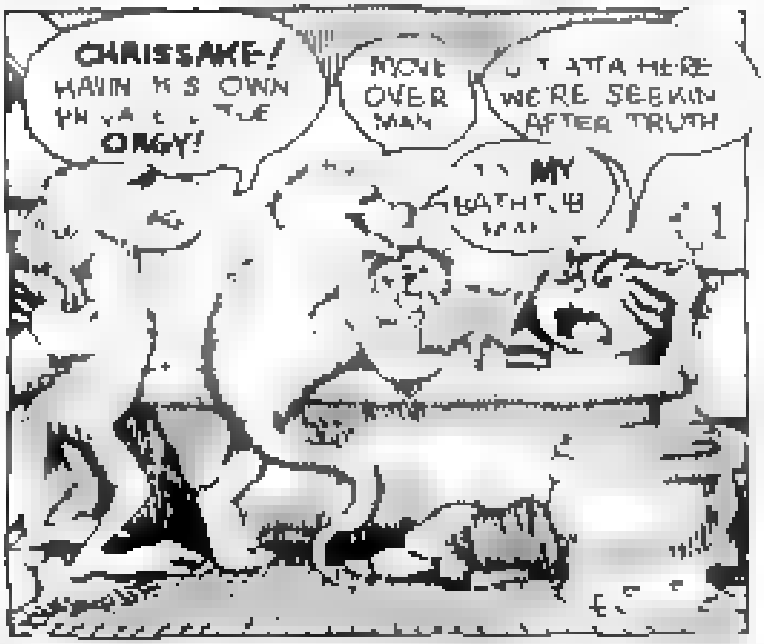
GEEEE!

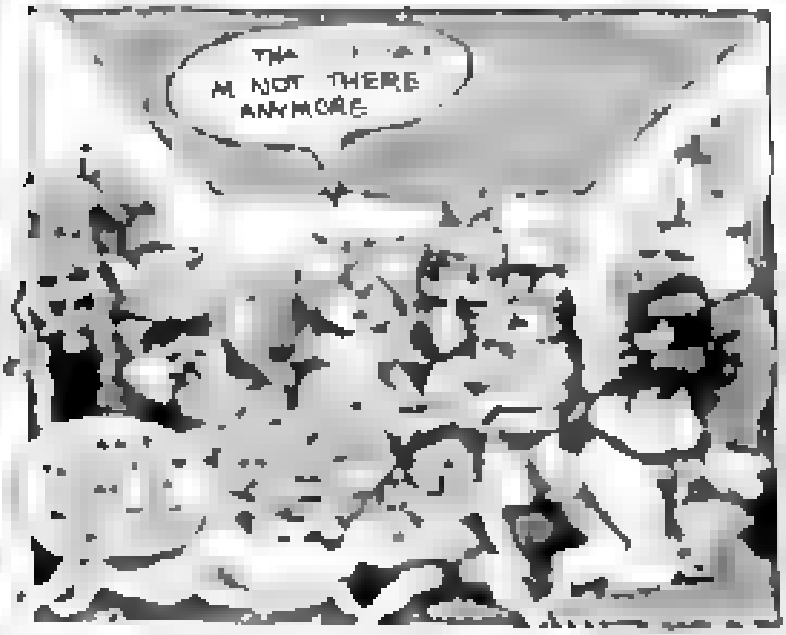
MAYBE WE BETTER GO, HUH?
NO! NOT AT ALL!

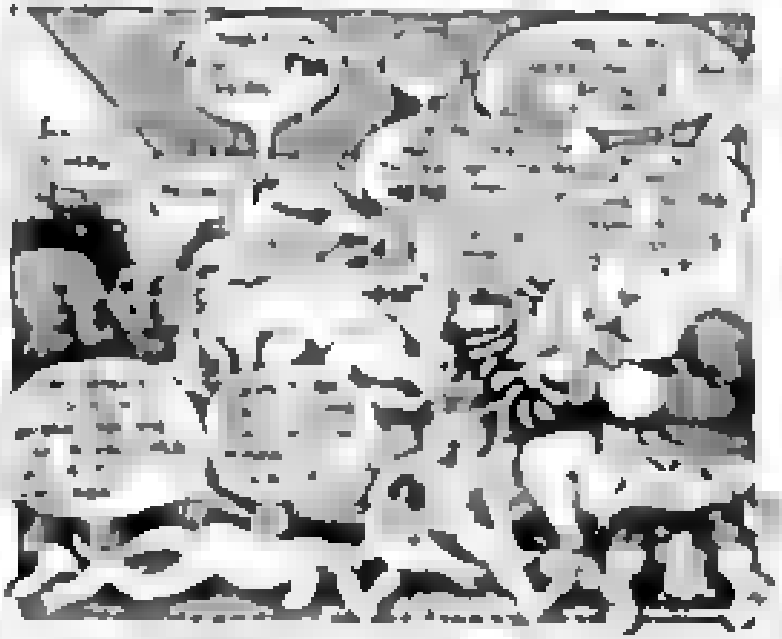
HERE! YOU GET OVER HERE AND YOU DOWN THERE, RE SO THAT'S RIGHT NOW YOU UNDER HERE

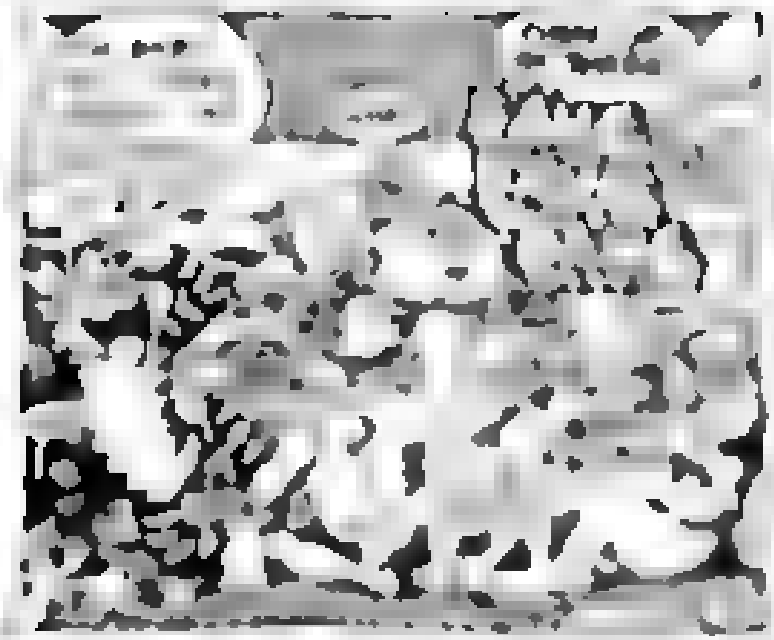

YES
GRUNT
AH

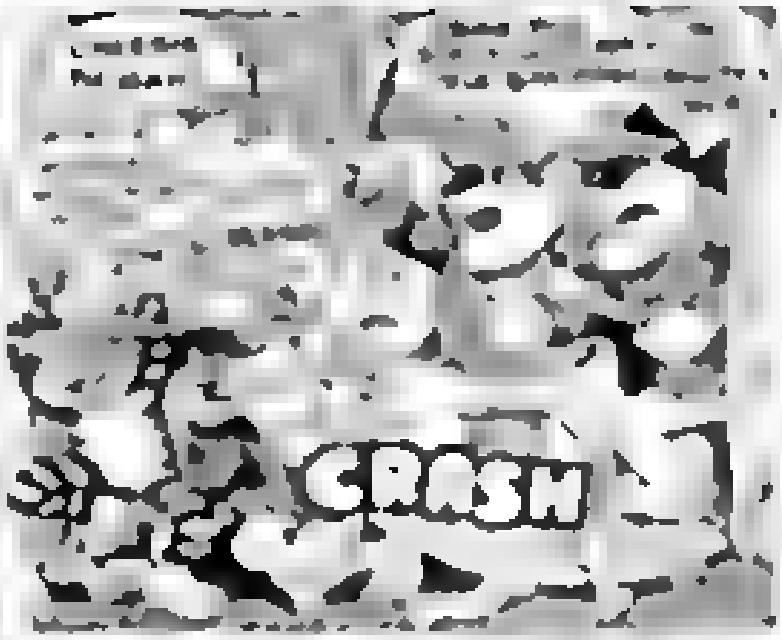

HEY MAN! WHAT
EH? WHAT DO YOU WANT

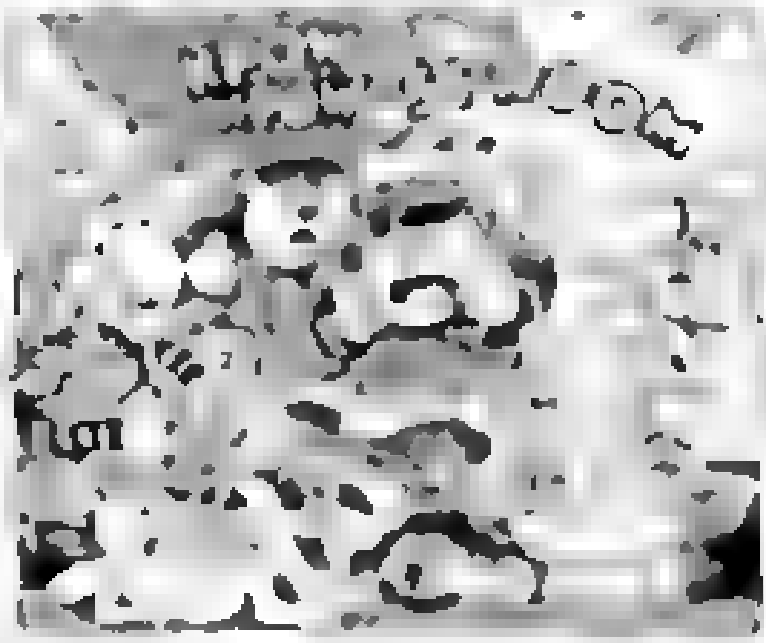

CHRISSAKE!
ORGY!
MOVE OVER MAN
WE'RE SEEKIN AFTER TRUTH
MY

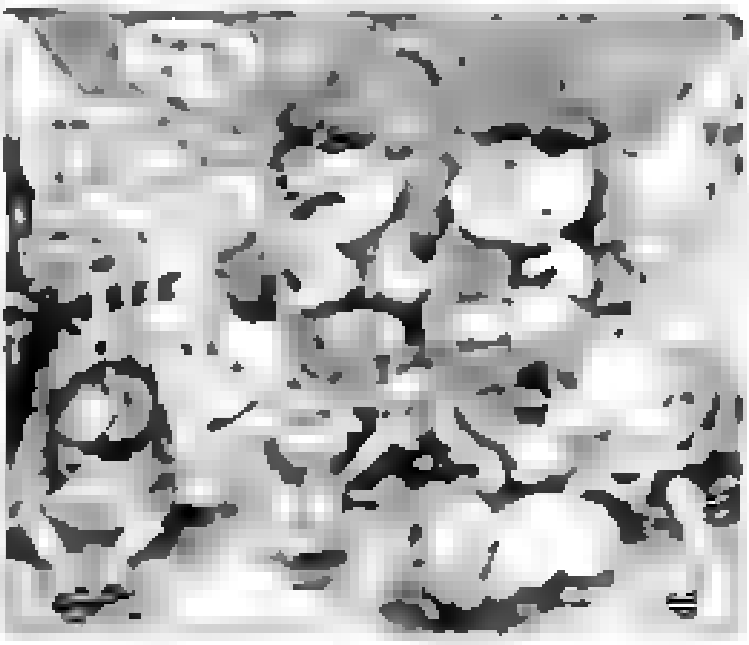

THA
M NOT THERE
ANYMORE






CRUSH

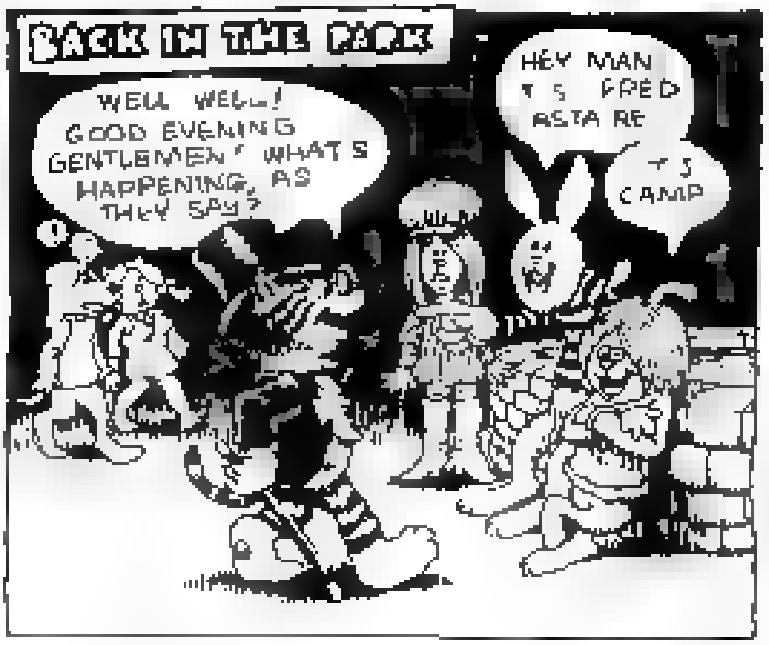




MOTHER OF GOD! I'M A FUGGIN' FUGITIVE!
STOP IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!

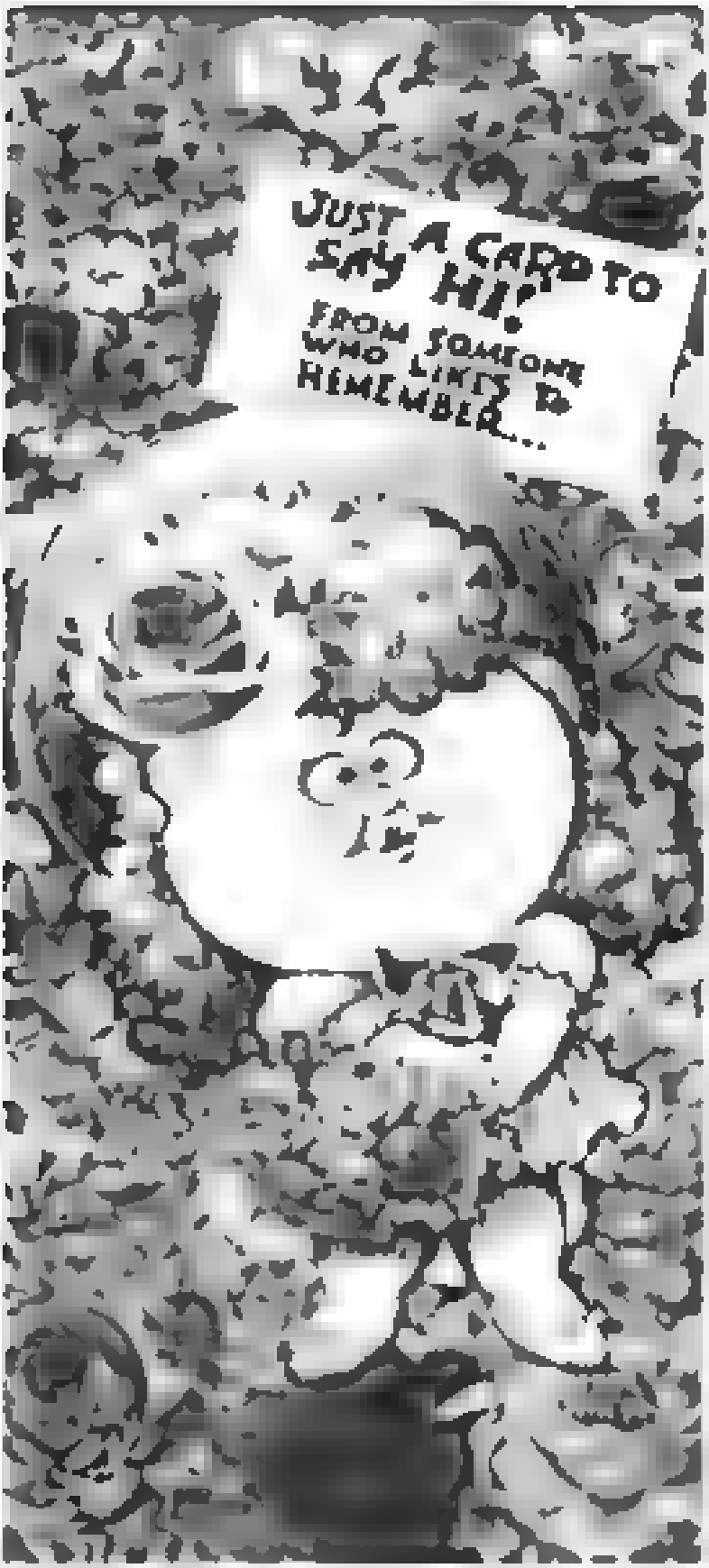
I DON' WAN NO RICKASHAY ROMENS? I DON WAN NO RICKASHAY LUV

MIGHTY CATCHY DITTY YOU'RE HUMMIN THERE, MATE COME OVER HERE AND TEACH I TO ME WILL YOU?
EH? SO-TINLY SO-TINLY A LOVELY MELODY OF TERESA BREWER FAVOR TE' HIC

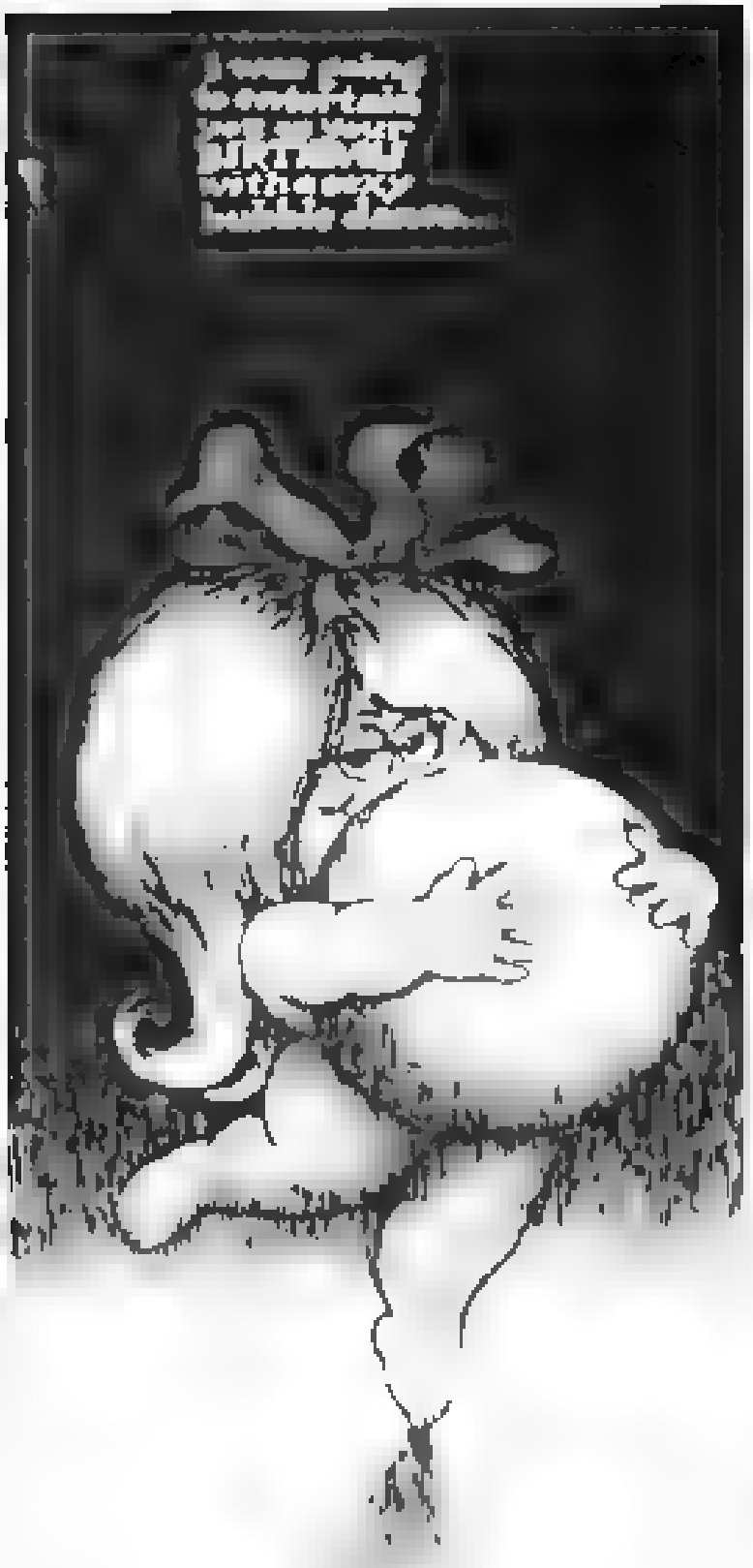

BACK IN THE PARK
WELL WELL! GOOD EVENING GENTLEMEN! WHAT'S HAPPENING, AS THEY SAY?
HEY MAN IT'S FRED ASTAIRE
IT'S CAMP

THE OLD BASTARD WAS FILTHY WITH MONEY BUT I'M NO CAP TA. ST ALL I LIFTED WAS HIS DINER'S CLUB CARD. IT'S BEEN A VERY WILD SORT OF A DAY. LIKE, STUFF HAPPENED!
YAS
WHO S HE?
SOMEBODY FAMOUS, I GET!

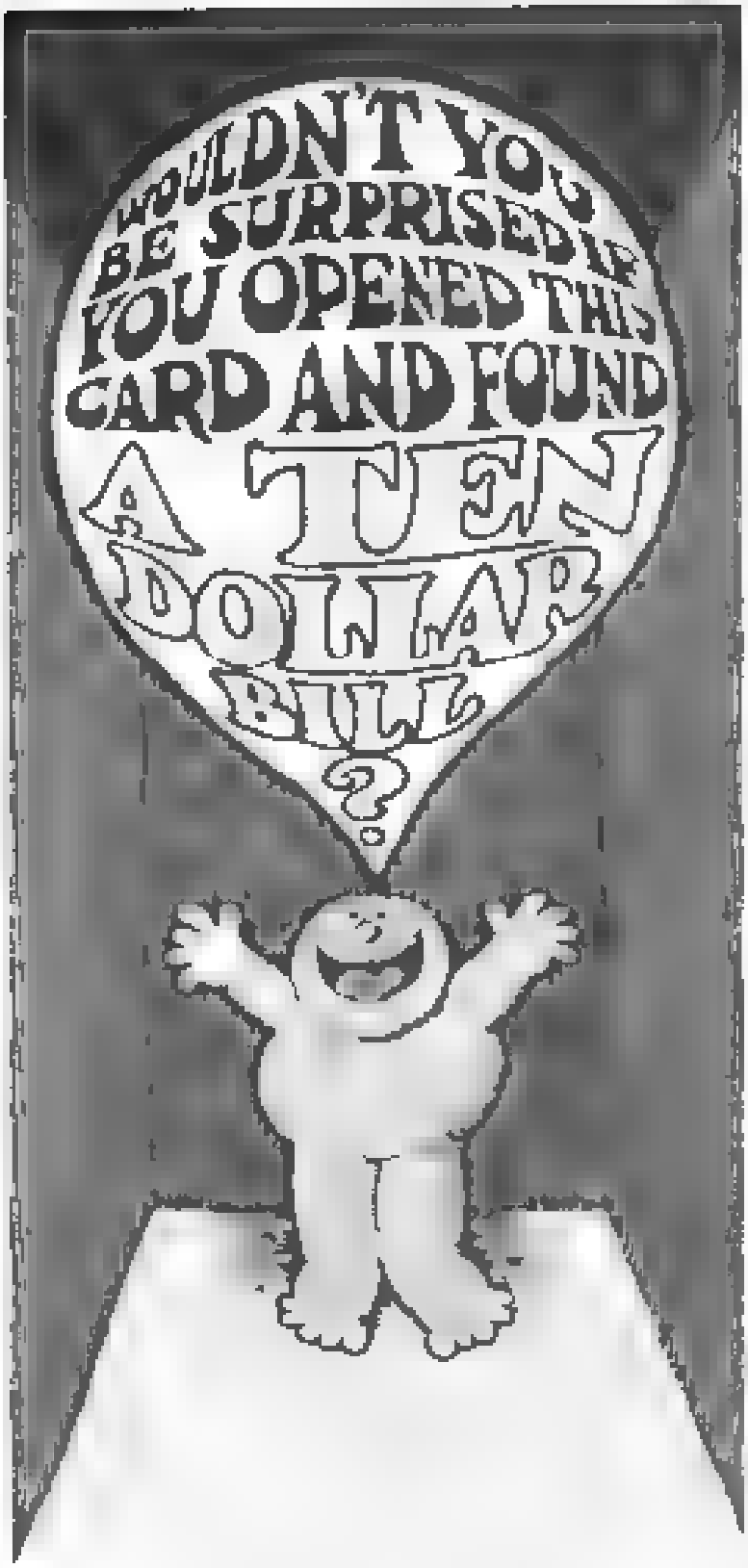
NEXT DAY
WHAT A MOB IN THE PARK TODAY
Y KNOW? SOMETHIN IT'S FRIGHTENING HOW EASY THESE FADS GET STARTED!
END


JUST A CARD TO SAY HI!
FROM SOMEONE WHO LIKES TO REMEMBER...

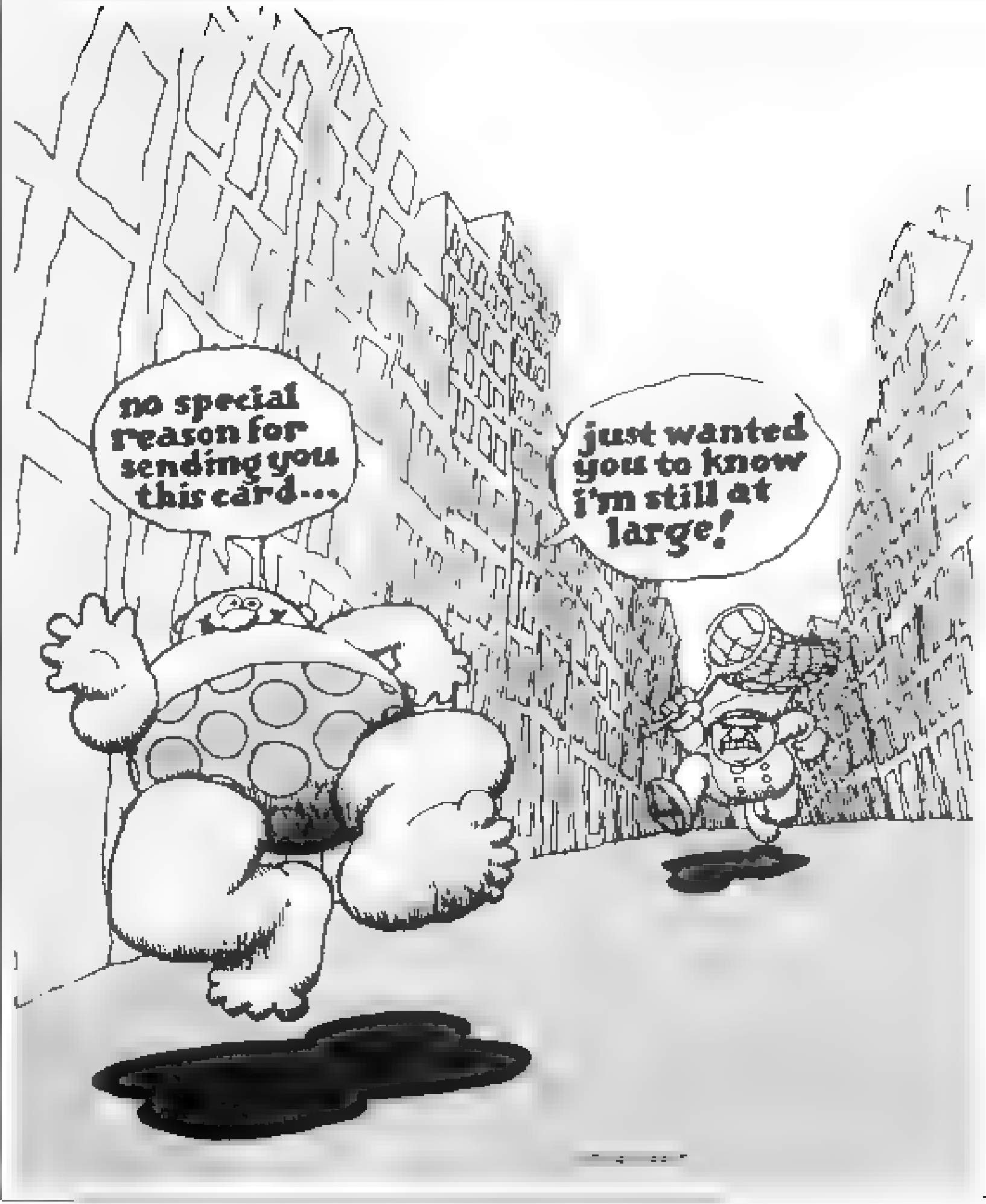
...SOMEONE TOO NICE TO FORGET!



[. but my mother said, "no soap! "]

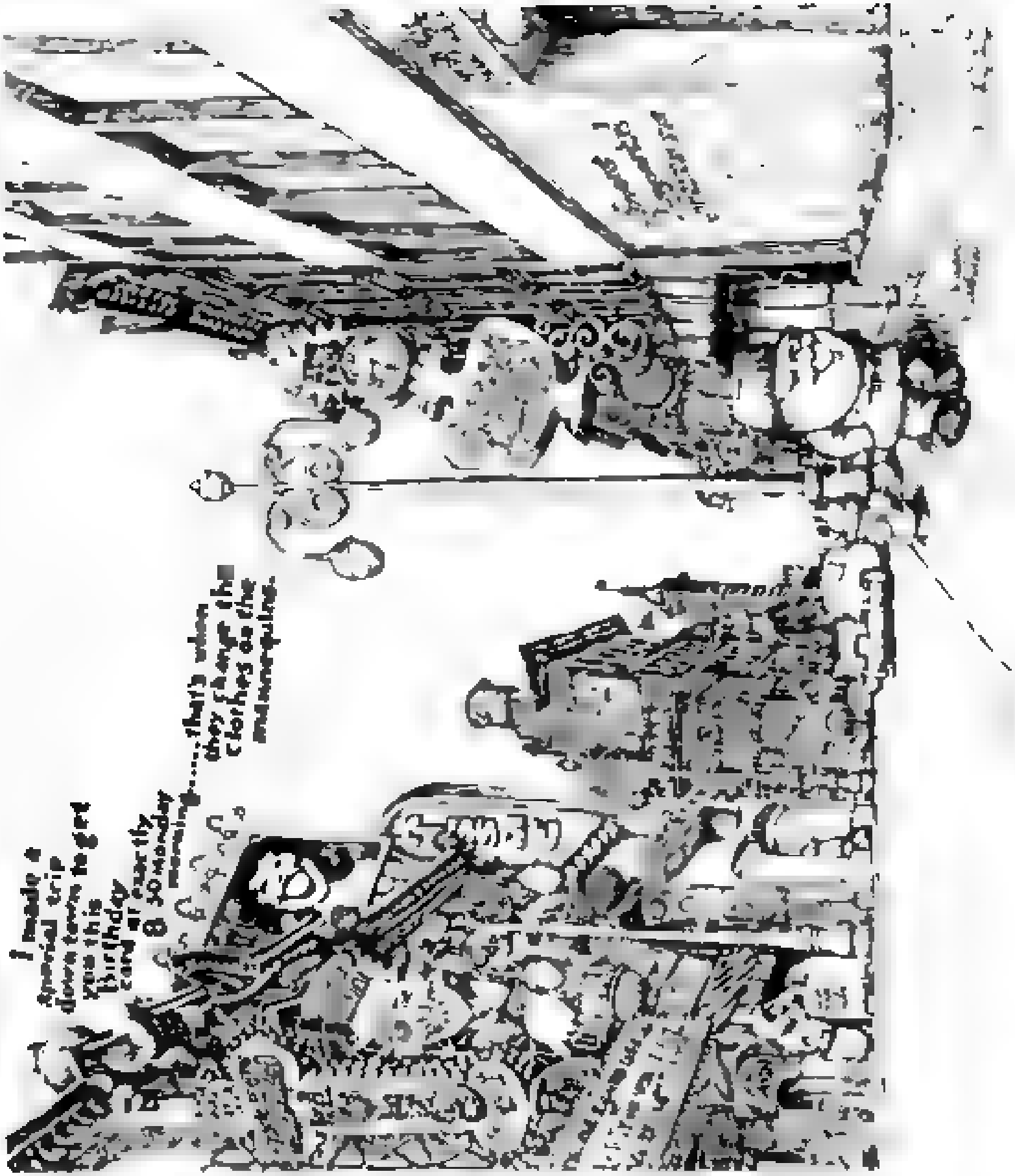


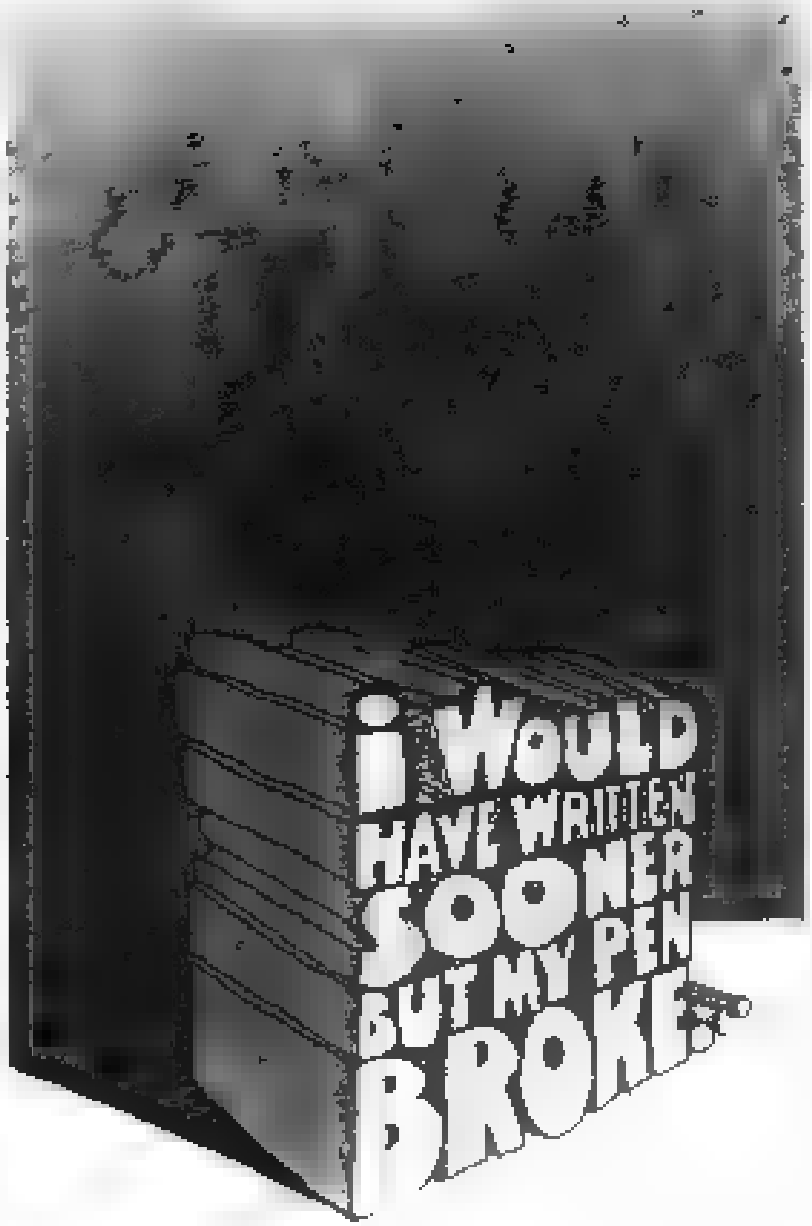
[*I'd* certainly be surprised if you found a ten dollar bill']


no special reason for sending you this card...
just wanted you to know i'm still at large!

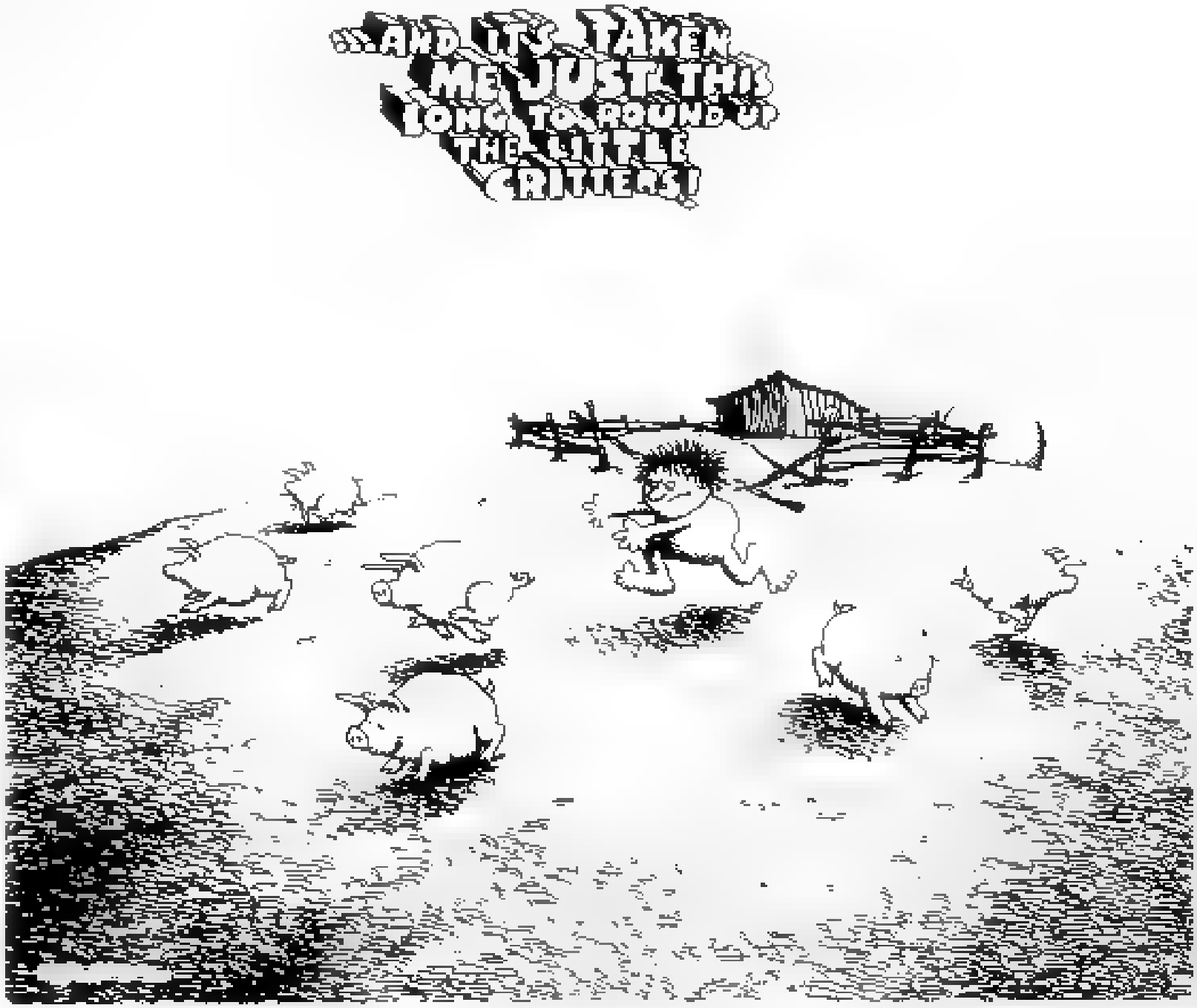
[and sure enough, that was the day I forgot your birthday.]

[you cute little DICKENS!]


I made a special trip down town to get you this birthday card at cost by a monday morning!
that's when they change the clothes on the mannequins.



[The cake would probably taste kind of weird anyway!]


...AND IT'S TAKEN ME JUST THIS LONG TO ROUND UP THE LITTLE CRITTERS!

[He took a full swing at a golf ball in a tile bathroom!]

[Hi Sugar Plum!]

[*Panel two.* However, I firmly denied a report you were seated in the theater when Lincoln was assassinated! *Panel three.* I told them you were actually in the lobby when the shooting occurred.]

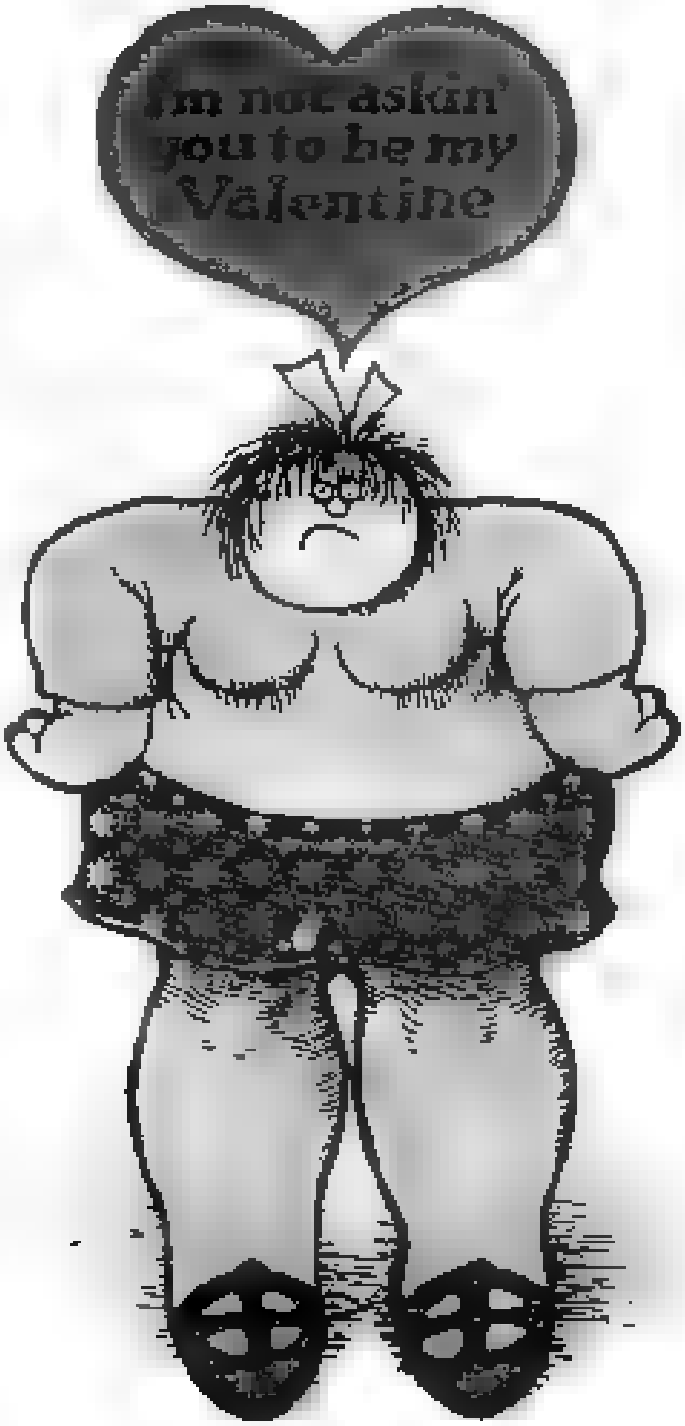
[Bring it over some night and we'll make the scene!]

[*Photo of a fist*]

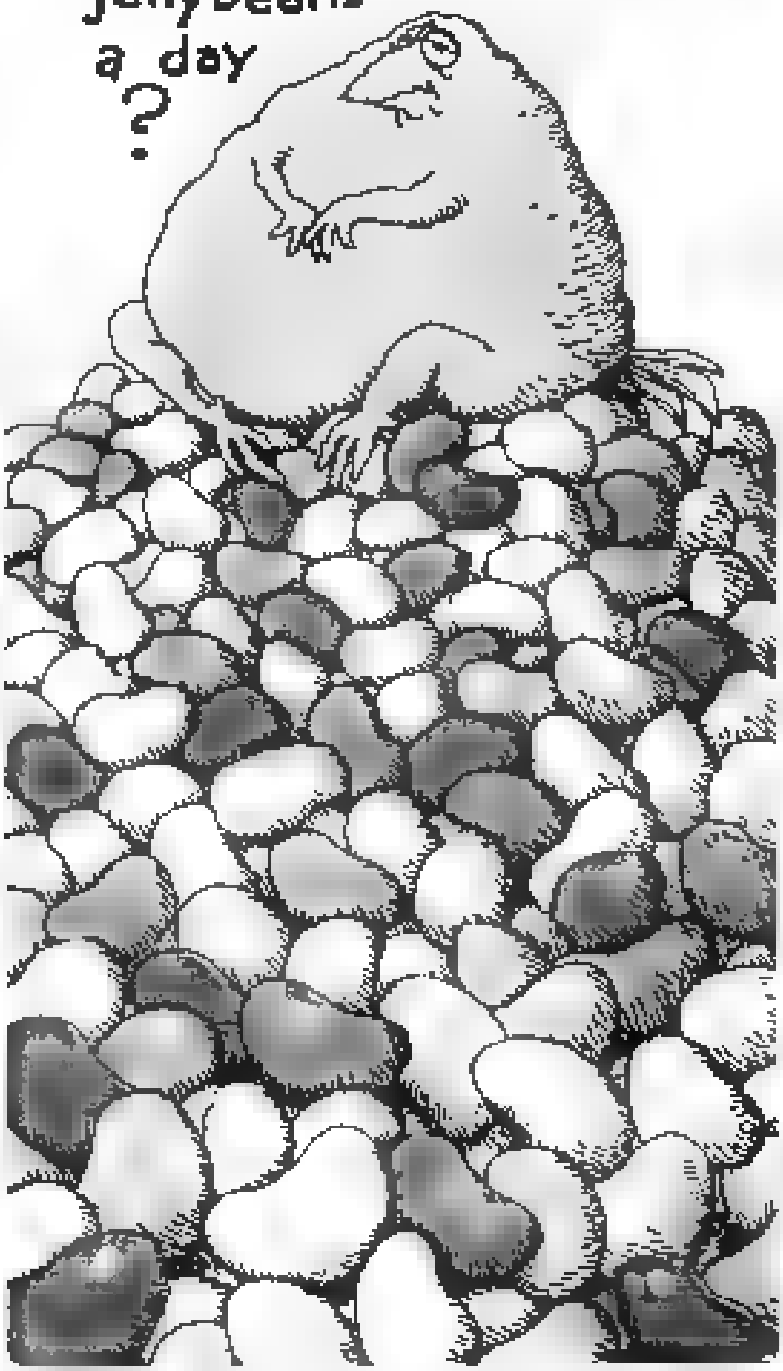
[*Punchline unavailable*]

[you're better!]

[You can always raise BAIL tomorrow!]



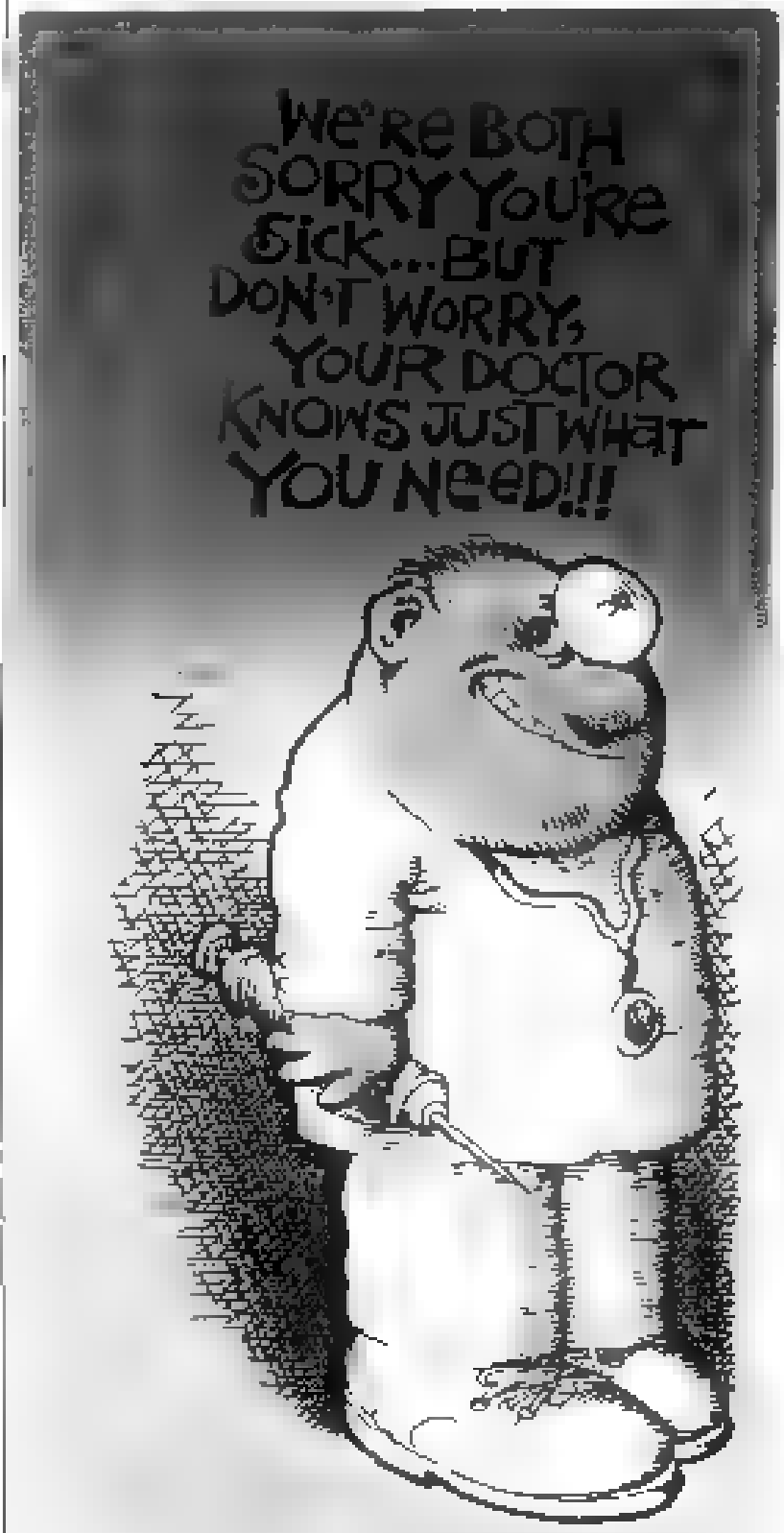
[I'm *tellin'* ya!]



[and there's no telling how many a married one could lay!]

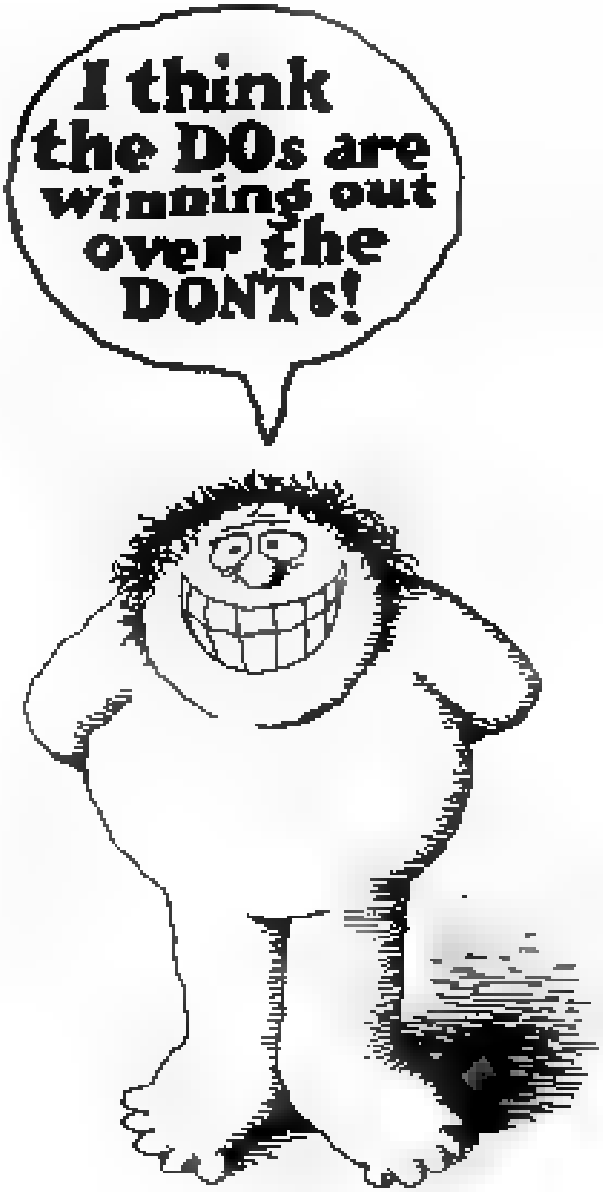
[thank goodness!]

[Just like the Volkswagen!]



[Punchline unavailable]

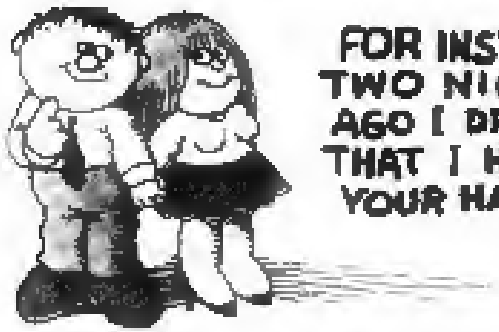
DON'T!
DO!
DON'T!
DO!
DON'T
DO!
DON'T
DO! DO! DO!


I think the DOs are winning out over the DONTs!

(You'd think they'd have designed one that didn't leak by this time!!)

Congratulations!

GEE, I'VE BEEN HAVING FUNNY DREAMS ABOUT YOU LATELY!

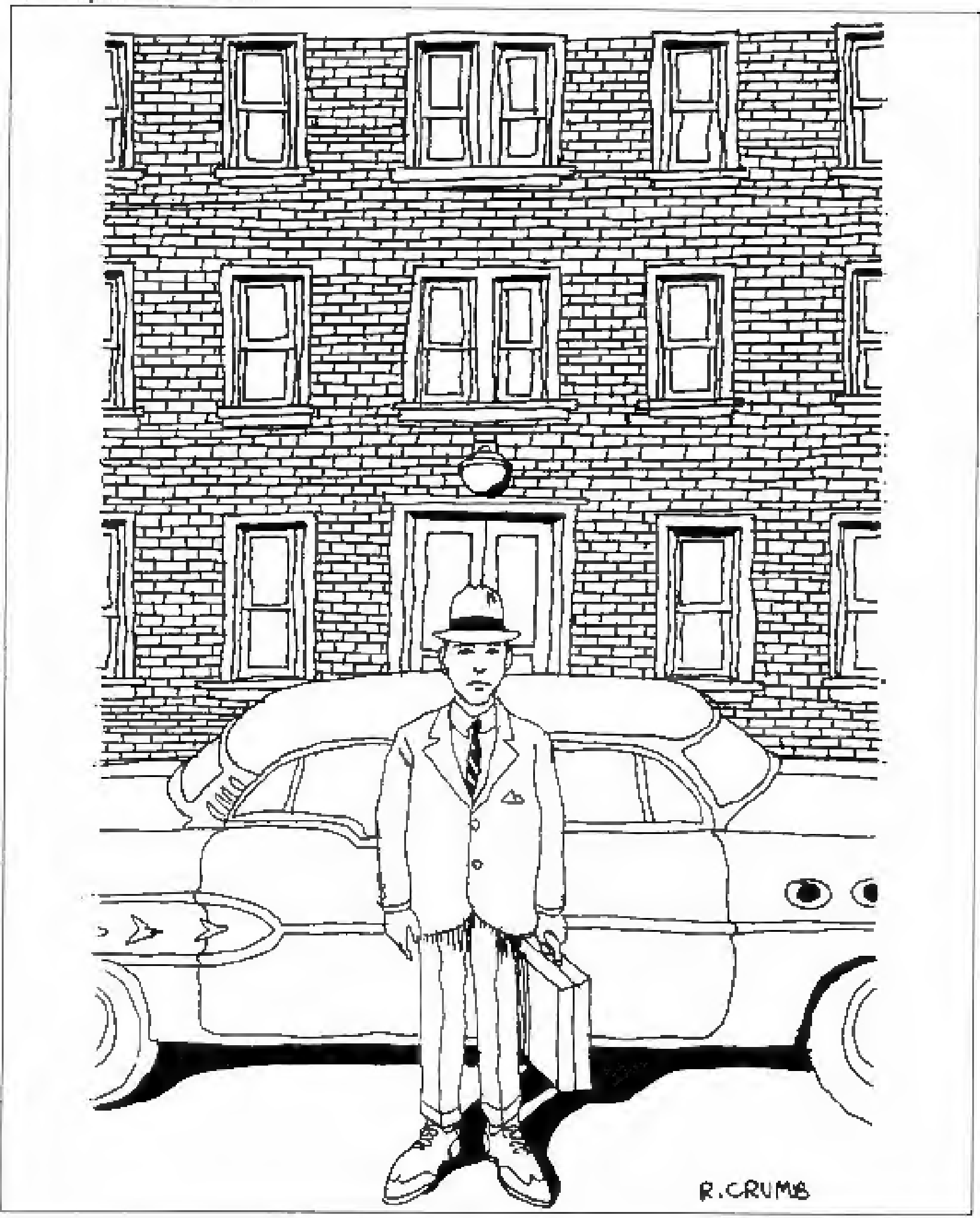


FOR INSTANCE, TWO NIGHTS AGO I DREAMED THAT I HELD YOUR HAND.

I'D WRITE MORE, BUT, HO HUM.... IT'S TIME TO HIT THE OLD SACK AGAIN!!

NIGHT BEFORE LAST I DREAMED THAT I KISSED YOU!

LAST NIGHT I DREAMED THAT I KISSED YOU AND HUGGED YOU ALL OVER!!


R.CRUMB

—continued from front flap

But Robert's own satirical claws were out for Fritz. The cat was a poseur: as struggling student, sensitive *artiste*, self-assured cocksman, stemwinder salesman, even CIA operative supreme. His posturing was taken seriously by others because, first of all, Fritz took it seriously himself. However, Robert saw to it that this egotistic role-playing kept Fritz in hot water. Barrels of it.

Much as Robert liked Europe, he saw that to depend on checks from Cleveland was to tempt famine. So, as soon as his back pay came through, he and Dana caught the first thing Icelandic Airways could lift to the States—and thence to Cleveland once more, and American Greetings.

In 1965, Kurtzman invited Crumb to come work for *Help!*. Robert was "completely thrilled at the idea of working with Kurtzman." Terry Gilliam had left, and Robert was confident he could replace him as assistant on *Help!*. "I jumped at that chance." Crumb and his wife arrived in New York City on a hot day, and found a claustrophobic one-room studio in Yorkville. Then he dropped by the *Help!* office—to learn that the magazine that very day had folded.

What kept Robert afloat during this New York sojourn was a series of assignments from another Kurtzman contact: Woody Gelman of Topps bubble gum cards' art studio. "I was getting the impression very quick in New York that you could work like a dog, but if you didn't get out of this low level, you could live in some shithole of a place and just work your ass off." The precise, technical expertise of the "beaten dogs" at Topps was "demanding, way over what I thought I was capable of handling. I just didn't have the tight finished professional approach. I felt very inadequate about it."

Robert left New York with a head full of guilt and acid fuzz, and under his arm a sketchbook that would one day spin many heads: Not just new comics, but an entirely new *kind* of comics—or comix.

—from the introduction by Marty Pahls

Dana & R. Crumb, 1966.

The Complete Crumb Comics Vol. 3: Starring Fritz The Cat **continues the multi-volume series comprising the complete works of the legendary cartoonist *R. Crumb*, one of America's most original, trenchant, and uncompromising satirists. The series includes the earliest, heretofore unpublished comic strips, as well as his underground comix, dramatic and autobiographical strips, and his classic cartoon creations, Fritz the Cat and Mr. Natural.**

"Newly married, in a strange land thousands of miles from America, Robert Crumb collated the confusion of inspirations and images that both attracted and repelled him about his native country, its inhabitants, and himself: the beatniks and bourgeois, folkers and rockers, blacks and radicals, poets and potheads. He conjured the lure of The Road, big fast cars, hitchhiking, bumming the railroads, crashing parties; even the understated narrow-tie cool of the JFK/LBJ-era government secret agents of paperback and television glory.

"Robert dressed his less-than-Great society in animal skins, and into them he sent a cat named Fritz... Robert first pencilled short, lighthearted Fritz adventures in small, blue-lined composition books. But the impressive, blank, waiting pages of 'the big book' seemed to demand more, both of the artist and his creation."

MARTY PAHLS
from his introduction to this volume

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